

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1895.

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THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1895.

THE SOWERS.

BY HENRY SETON MERRIMAN,

AUTHOR OF 'WITH EDGED TOOLS,' ETC.

CHAPTER X.

THE MOSCOW DOCTOR.

'COLOSSAL!' exclaimed Steinmetz beneath his breath. With a little trick of the tongue he transferred his cigar from the right-hand to the left-hand corner of his mouth. 'Colossal—!' he repeated.

For a moment Paul looked up from the papers spread out on the table before him—looked with the preoccupied air of a man who is adding up something in his mind. Then he returned to his occupation. He had been at this work for four hours without a break. It was nearly one o'clock in the morning. Since dinner Karl Steinmetz had consumed no less than five cigars, while he had not spoken five words. These two men, locked in a small room in the middle of the castle of Osterno—a room with no window, but which gained its light from the clear heaven by a shaft and a skylight on the roof—locked in thus they had been engaged in the addition of an enormous mass of figures. Each sheet had been carefully annotated and added by Steinmetz, and as each was finished he handed it to his companion.

'Is that fool never coming?' asked Paul, with an impatient glance at the clock.

'Our very dear friend the Starosta,' replied Steinmetz, 'is no slave to time. He is late.'

The room had the appearance of an office. There were two

safes—square chests such as we learn to associate with the name of Griffiths in this country. There was a huge writing-table—a double table—at which Paul and Steinmetz were seated. There were sundry stationery cases and an almanac or so suspended on the walls, which were oaken panels. A large white stove—common to all Russian rooms—stood against the wall. The room had no less than three doors, with a handle on no one of them. Each door opened with a key, like a cupboard.

Steinmetz had apparently finished his work. He was sitting back in his chair contemplating his companion with a little smile. It apparently tickled some obtuse Teutonic sense of humour to see this prince doing work which is usually assigned to clerks—working out statistics and abstruse calculations as to how much food is required to keep body and soul together.

The silence of the room was almost oppressive. A Russian village after nightfall is the quietest human habitation on earth. For the moujik—the native of a country which will some day supply the universe with petroleum—cannot afford to light up his humble abode, and therefore sits in darkness. Had the village of Osterno possessed the liveliness of a Spanish hamlet, the sound of voices and laughter could not have reached the castle perched high up on the rock above.

But Osterno was asleep: the castle servants had long gone to rest, and the great silence of Russia wrapped its wings over all. When, therefore, the clear, coughing bark of a wolf was heard, both occupants of the little room looked up. The sound was repeated, and Steinmetz slowly rose from his seat.

‘I can quite believe that our friend is able to call a wolf or a lynx to him,’ he said. ‘He does it well.’

‘I have seen him do so,’ said Paul without looking up. ‘But it is a common enough accomplishment among the keepers.’

Steinmetz had left the room before he finished speaking. One of the doors of this little room communicated with a larger apartment used as a secretary’s office, and through this by a small staircase with a side entrance to the castle. By this side entrance the stewards of the different outlying estates were conducted to the presence of the resident secretary—a German selected and overawed by Karl Steinmetz—a mere calculating machine of a man with whom we have no affairs to transact.

Before many minutes had elapsed Steinmetz came back, closely followed by the Starosta, whose black eyes twinkled and gleamed

in the sudden light of the lamp. He dropped on his knees when he saw Paul—suddenly, abjectly, like an animal in his dumb attitude of deprecation.

With a jerk of his head Paul bade him rise, which the man did, standing back against the panelled wall, placing as great a distance between himself and the prince as the size of the room would allow.

‘Well,’ said Paul, curtly, almost roughly, ‘I hear you are in trouble in the village.’

‘The cholera has come, Excellency.’

‘Many deaths?’

‘To-day—eleven.’

Paul looked up sharply.

‘And the doctor?’

‘He has not come yet, Excellency. I sent for him—a fortnight ago. The cholera is at Oseff, at Dolja, at Kalisheffa. It is everywhere. He has forty thousand souls under his care. He has to obey the Zemstvo, to go where they tell him. He takes no notice of me.’

‘Yes,’ interrupted Paul, ‘I know. And the people themselves, do they attempt to understand it—to follow out my instructions?’

The Starosta spread out his thin hands in deprecation. He cringed a little as he stood. He had Jewish blood in his veins, which, while it raised him above his fellows in Osterno, carried with it the usual tendency to cringe. It is in the blood; it is part of what the people who stood without Pilate’s palace took upon themselves and upon their children.

‘Your Excellency,’ he said, ‘knows what they are. It is slow. They make no progress. For them one disease is as another. “Bog dal e Bog vzial,” they say. “God gave and God took!”’

He paused, his black eyes flashing from one face to the other.

‘Only the Moscow Doctor, Excellency,’ he said significantly, ‘can manage them.’

Paul shrugged his shoulders. He rose from his seat, glancing at Steinmetz, who was looking on in silence, with his queer, mocking smile.

‘I will go with you now,’ he said. ‘It is late enough already.’

The Starosta bowed very low, but he said nothing.

Paul went to a cupboard and took from it an old fur coat, dragged at the seams, stained about the cuffs a dull brown—doctors know the colour. Such stains have hangcd a man before

now, for they are the marks of blood. Paul put on this coat. He took a long soft silken scarf such as Russians wear in winter, and wrapped it round his throat, quite concealing the lower part of his face. He crammed a fur cap down over his ears.

‘Come,’ he said.

Karl Steinmetz accompanied them downstairs, carrying a lamp in one hand. He closed the door behind them, but did not lock it. Then he went upstairs again to the quiet little room, where he sat down in a deep chair. He looked at the open door of the cupboard from which Paul Alexis had taken his simple disguise, with a large tolerant humour.

‘El señor don Quijote de la Mancha,’ he said sleepily.

It is said that to a doctor nothing is shocking and nothing is disgusting. But doctors are, after all, only men of stomach like the rest of us, and it is to be presumed that what nauseates one will nauseate the other. When the Starosta unceremoniously threw open the door of the miserable cabin belonging to Vassili Tula, Paul gave a little gasp. The foul air pouring out of the noisome den was such that it seemed impossible that human lungs could assimilate it. This Vassili Tula was a notorious drunkard, a discontent, a braggart. The Nihilist propaganda had in the early days of that mistaken mission reached him and unsettled his discontented mind. Misfortune seemed to pursue him. In higher grades of life than his there are men who, like Tula, make a profession of misfortune.

Paul stumbled down two steps. The cottage was dark. The Starosta had apparently trodden on a chicken, which screamed shrilly and fluttered about in the dark with that complete *abandon* which belongs to chickens, sheep, and some women.

‘Have you no light?’ cried the Starosta.

Paul retreated to the top step, where he had a short-lived struggle with a well-grown calf which had been living in the room with the family, and evinced a very creditable desire for fresh air.

‘Yes, yes, we have a little petroleum,’ said a voice. ‘But we have no matches.’

The Starosta struck a light.

‘I have brought the Moscow Doctor to see you.’

‘The Moscow Doctor!’ cried several voices. ‘*Sbogom—sbogom*. God be with you.’

In the dim light the whole of the floor seemed to get up and shake itself. There were at least seven persons sleeping in the

hut. Two of them did not get up. One was dead. The other was dying of cholera.

A heavily built man reached down from the top of the brick stove a cheap tin paraffin lamp, which he handed to the Starosta. By the light of this Paul came again into the hut. The floor was filthy, as may be imagined, for beasts and human beings lived here together.

The man—Vassili Tula—threw himself down on his knees, clawing at Paul's coat with great unwashed hands, whining out a tale of sorrow and misfortune. In a moment they were all on their knees, clinging to him, crying to him for help. Tula himself, a wild-looking Slav of fifty or thereabouts; his wife, haggard, emaciated, horrible to look upon, for she was toothless and almost blind; two women, and a loutish boy of sixteen.

Paul pushed his way, not unkindly, towards the corner where the two motionless forms lay half concealed by a mass of ragged sheepskin.

'Here,' he said, 'this woman is dead. Take her out. When will you learn to be clean? This boy may live—with care. Bring the light closer, little mother. So, it is well. He will live. Come, don't sit crying. Take all these rags out and burn them. All of you go out. It is a fine night. You are better in the cart-shed than here. Here, you, Tula, go round with the Starosta to his store. He will give you clean blankets.'

They obeyed him blindly. Tula and one of the young women (his daughters) dragged the dead body, which was that of a very old woman, out into the night. The Starosta had retired to the doorway when the lamp was lighted, his courage having failed him. The air was foul with the reek of smoke and filth and infection.

'Come, Vassili Tula,' the village elder said, with suspicious eagerness. 'Come with me, I will give you what the good doctor says. Though you owe me money, and you never try to pay me.'

But Tula was kissing and mumbling over the hem of Paul's coat. Paul took no notice of him.

'We are starving, Excellency,' the man was saying. 'I can get no work. I had to sell my horse in the winter, and I cannot plough my little piece of land. The Government will not help us. The Prince—curse him!—does nothing for us. He lives in Petersburg, where he spends all his money, and has food and wine more than he wants. The Count Stepán Lanovitch used to assist

us—God be with him ! But he has been sent to Siberia because he helped the peasants. He was like you; he was a great “bárin,” a great noble, and yet he helped the peasants.’

Paul turned round sharply and shook the man off.

‘Go,’ he said, ‘with the Starosta and get what I tell you. A great strong fellow like you has no business on his knees to any man. I will not help you unless you help yourself. You are a lazy good-for-nothing. Get out.’

He pushed him out of the hut, and kicked after him a few rags of clothing which were lying about on the floor all filthy and slimy.

‘Good God!’ muttered he under his breath in English, ‘that a place like this should exist beneath the very walls of Osterno!’

From hut to hut he went all through that night on his mission of mercy—without enthusiasm, without high-flown notions respecting mankind, but with the simple sense of duty that was his. These people were his things—his dumb and driven beasts. In his heart there may have existed a grudge against the Almighty for placing him in a position which was not only intensely disagreeable, but also somewhat ridiculous. For he did not dare to tell his friends of these things. He had spoken of them to no man except Karl Steinmetz, who was in a sense his dependent. English public school and university had instilled into him the intensely British feeling of shame respecting good works. He could take chaff as well as any man, for he was grave by habit, and a grave man receives the most chaff most good-humouredly. But he had a nervous dread of being found out. He had made a sort of religion of suppressing the fact that he was a prince; the holy of holies of this cult was the fact that he was a prince who sought to do good to his neighbour—a prince in whom one might repose trust.

This was not the first time by any number that he had gone down into his own village insisting in a rough-and-ready way on cleanliness and purity.

‘The Moscow Doctor,’ the peasants would say in the ‘kabak’ over their vodka and their tea, ‘the Moscow Doctor comes in and kicks our beds out of the door. He comes in and throws our furniture into the street. But afterwards he gives us new beds and new furniture.’

It was a joke that always obtained in the ‘kabak.’ It flavoured the vodka, and with that fiery poison served to raise a laugh.

The Moscow Doctor was looked upon in Osterno and in many neighbouring villages as second only to God. In fact, many of the peasants placed him before their Creator. They were stupid, vodka-soddened, hapless men. The Moscow Doctor they could see for themselves. He came in, a very tangible thing of flesh and blood, built on a large and manly scale; he took them by the shoulders and bundled them out of their own houses, kicking their bedding after them. He scolded them, he rated them, and abused them. He brought them food and medicine. He understood the diseases which from time to time swept over their villages. No cold was too intense for him to brave should they be in distress. He asked no money, and he gave none. But they lived on his charity, and they were wise enough to know it.

What wonder if these poor wretches loved the man whom they could see and hear above the God who manifested Himself to them in no way! The orthodox priests of their villages had no money to spend on their parishioners. On the contrary, they asked for money to keep the churches in repair. What wonder, then, if these poor ignorant, helpless peasants would listen to no priest; for the priest could not explain to them why it was that God sent a four-months-long winter which cut them off from the rest of the world behind impassable barriers of snow; that God sent them droughts in the summer so that there was no crop of rye; that God scourged them with dread and horrible disease!

It is almost impossible for us to realise in these days of a lamentably cheap press and a cheaper literature the mental condition of men and women who have no education, no newspaper, no news of the world, no communication with the universe. To them the mystery of the Moscow Doctor was as incomprehensible as to us is the Deity. They were so near to the animals that Paul could not succeed in teaching them that disease and death followed on the heel of dirt and neglect. They were too ignorant to reason, too low down the animal scale to comprehend things which some of the dumb animals undoubtedly recognise.

Paul Alexis, half Russian, half English, understood these people very thoroughly. He took advantage of their ignorance, their simplicity, their unfathomable superstition. He governed as no other could have ruled them, by fear and kindness at once. He mastered them by his vitality, the wholesome strength of his nature, his infinite superiority. He avoided the terrible mistake of the Nihilists by treating them as children to whom education

must be given little by little instead of throwing down before them a mass of dangerous knowledge which their minds, unaccustomed to such strong food, are incapable of digesting.

A British coldness of blood damped as it were the Russian quixotism which would desire to see result follow upon action—to see the world make quicker progress than its Creator has decreed. With very unsatisfactory material Paul was setting in motion a great rock which will roll down into the ages unconnected with his name, clearing a path through a very thick forest of ignorance and tyranny.

CHAPTER XI.

CATRINA.

THE man who carries a deceit, however innocent, with him through life is apt to be somewhat handicapped in that unfair competition. He is like a ship at sea with a 'sprung' mainmast. A side breeze may arise at any moment which throws him all aback and upon his beam ends. He runs illegitimate risks, which are things much given to dragging at a man's mind, handicapping his thoughts.

Paul suffered in this way. It was a distinct burden to him to play a double part, although each was innocent enough in itself. At school, and later on at Cambridge, he had consistently and steadily suppressed a truth from friend and foe alike—namely, that he was in his own country a prince. No great crime on the face of it; but a constant suppression of a very small truth is as burdensome as any suggestion of falsehood. It makes one afraid of contemptible foes, and doubtful of the value of one's own friendship.

Paul was a simple-minded man. He was not afraid of the Russian Government. Indeed, he cultivated a fine contempt for that august body. But he was distinctly afraid of being found out, for that discovery could only mean an incontinent cessation of the good work which rendered his life happy.

The fear of being deprived of this interest in existence should certainly have been lessened, if not quite allayed, by the fact that a greater interest had been brought into his life in the pleasant form of a prospective wife. When he was in London with Etta Sydney Bamborough, he did not, however, forget Osterno. He

only longed for the time when he could take Etta freely into his confidence and engage her interest in the object of his ambition—namely, to make the huge Osterno estate into that lump of leaven which might in time leaven the whole of the empire.

That a man is capable of sustaining two absorbing interests at once is a matter of every-day illustration. Are we not surrounded by men who do their work well in life and love their wives well at home without allowing the one to interfere with the other? That women are capable of the same seems exceedingly probable. But we are a race of sheep who run after each other, guided for the moment by a catchword which will not bear investigation, or an erroneous deduction set in alliterative verse which clings to the mind and sways it. Thus we all think that woman's whole existence is, and is only capable of, love, because a poet, in the trickiness of his trade, once said so.

Now, Paul held a different opinion. He thought that Etta could manage to love him well, as she said she did, and yet take an interest in that which was in reality the object of his life. He intended to take the earliest opportunity of telling her all about the work he was endeavouring to carry out at Osterno, and the knowledge that he was withholding something from her was a constant burden to an upright and honest nature.

'I think,' he said one morning to Steinmetz, 'that I will write and tell Mrs. Sydney Bamborough all about this place.'

'I should not do that,' replied Steinmetz with a leisurely promptitude.

They were alone in a great smoking-room of which the walls were hung all round with hunting trophies. Paul was smoking a cigar. Steinmetz reflected gravely over a pipe. They were both reading Russian newspapers—periodicals chiefly remarkable for that which they leave unsaid.

'Why not?' asked Paul.

'On principle. Never tell a woman that which is not interesting enough to magnify into a secret.'

Paul turned over his newspaper. He began reading again. Then, suddenly, he looked up.

'We are engaged to be married,' he observed pointedly.

Steinmetz took his pipe from his lips slowly and imperturbably. He was a man to whom it was no satisfaction to impart news. He either knew it before or did not take much interest in the matter.

'That makes it worse,' he said. 'A woman only conceals what is bad about her husband. If she knows anything that is likely to make other women think that their husbands are inferior, she will tell it.'

Paul laughed.

'But this is not good,' he argued. 'We have kept it so confidentially quiet that I am beginning to feel as if it is a crime.'

Steinmetz uncrossed his legs, crossed them again, and then spoke after mature reflection:

'As I understand the law of libel, a man is punished, not for telling a lie, but for telling either the truth or a lie with malicious intent. I imagine the Almighty will take the intent into consideration, if human justice finds it expedient to do so.'

Paul shrugged his shoulders. Argument was not his strong point, and, like most men who cannot argue, he was almost impervious to the arguments of others. He recognised the necessity for secrecy—the absolute need of a thousand little secretive precautions and disguises which were intensely disagreeable to him. But he also grumbled at them freely, and whenever he made such objection Karl Steinmetz grew uneasy, as if the question which he disposed of with facile philosophy or humorous resignation had behind it a possibility and an importance of which he was fully aware. It was on these rare occasions that he might have conveyed to a keen observer the impression that he was playing a very dangerous game with a smiling countenance.

'All that we do,' pursued Steinmetz, 'is to bow to a lamentable necessity for deceit. I have bowed to it all my life. It has been my trade, perhaps. It is not our fault that we are placed in charge of four or five thousand human beings who are no more capable of helping themselves than are sheep. It is not our fault that the forefathers of these sheep cut down the forests and omitted to plant more, so that the flocks with whom we have to deal have no fuel. It is not our fault that a most terrific winter annually renders the land unproductive for four months. It is not our fault that the Government to whom we are forced to bow . . . the Czar whose name lifts our hats from our heads . . . it is not our fault that progress and education are taboo, and that all who endeavour to forward the cause of humanity are promptly put away in a safe place where they are at liberty to forward their own salvation and nothing else. Nothing is our fault, *mein lieber*, in this country. We have to make the best of adverse circum-

stances. We are not breaking any human law, and in doing nothing we should be breaking a divine command.'

Paul flicked the ash off his cigar. He had heard all this before. Karl Steinmetz's words were usually more remarkable for solid thoughtfulness than for brilliancy of conception or any great novelty of expression.

'Oh!' said Paul quietly, 'I am not going to leave off. You need not fear that. Only I shall have to tell my wife. Surely a woman could help us in a thousand ways. There is such a lot that only a woman understands.'

'Yes,' grunted Steinmetz; 'and only the right sort of woman.'

Paul looked up sharply.

'You must leave that to me,' he said.

'My very dear friend, I leave everything to you.' Paul smiled.

There was no positive proof that this was not strictly true. There was no saying that Karl Steinmetz did not leave everything to everybody. But wise people thought differently.

'You don't know Etta,' he said, half shyly. 'She is full of sympathy and pity for these people.'

Steinmetz bowed gravely.

'I have no doubt of it.'

'And yet you say that she must not be told.'

'Certainly not. A secret is considerably strained if it be divided between two people. Stretching it to three will probably break it. You can tell her when you are married. Does she consent to live in Osterno?'

'Oh, yes. I think so.'

'Um . . . m.'

'What did you say?'

'Um . . . m,' repeated Steinmetz, and the conversation somewhat naturally showed signs of collapse.

At this moment the door was opened, and a servant in bright livery, with powdered wig, silk stockings, and a countenance which might have been of wood, brought in a letter on a silver tray.

Paul took the square envelope and turned it over, displaying as he did so a coronet in black and gold on the corner, like a stamp.

Karl Steinmetz saw the coronet. He never took his quiet, unobtrusive glance from Paul's face while he opened the letter and read it.

'A fresh difficulty,' said Paul, throwing the note across to his companion.

Steinmetz looked grave while he unfolded the thick stationery.

'DEAR PAUL [the letter ran],—I hear you are at Osterno and that the Moscow Doctor is in your country. We are in great distress at Thors—cholera, I fear. The fame of your doctor has spread to my people, and they are clamouring for him. Can you bring or send him over? You know your room here is always in readiness. Come soon with the great doctor and also Herr Steinmetz. In doing so you will give more than pleasure to your old friend,

CATRINA LANOVITCH.'

'P.S.—Mother is afraid to go out of doors for fear of infection. She thinks she has a little cold.'

Steinmetz folded the letter very carefully, pressing the seam of it reflectively with his stout forefinger and thumb.

'I always think of the lie first,' he said. 'It is my nature or my misfortune. We can easily write and say that the Moscow Doctor has left.'

He paused, scratching his brow pensively with his curved forefinger. It is to be feared that he was seeking not so much the truth as the most convenient perversion of the same.

'But then,' he went on, 'by doing that we leave these poor devils to die in their . . . sties. Catrina cannot manage them. They are worse than our people.'

'Whatever is the best lie to tell,' burst in Paul—'as we seem to live in an atmosphere of them—I must go to Thors; that is quite certain.'

'There is no must in the case,' put in Steinmetz quietly, as a parenthesis. 'No man is compelled to throw himself in the way of infection. But I know you will go, whatever I say.'

'I suppose I shall,' admitted Paul.

'And Catrina will find you out at once.'

'Why?'

Steinmetz drew in his feet. He leant forward and knocked his pipe on one of the logs that lay ready to light in the great open fireplace.

'Because she loves you,' he said shortly. 'There is no coming the Moscow Doctor over her, *mein lieber*.'

Paul laughed rather awkwardly. He was one of the few men—

daily growing fewer—who hold that a woman's love is not a thing to be tossed lightly about in conversation.

'Then——' he began, speaking rather quickly, as if afraid that Steinmetz was going to say more. 'If,' he amended, 'you think she will find out, she must not see me, that is all.'

Steinmetz reflected again. He was unusually grave over this matter. One would scarcely have taken this stout German for a person of any sentiment whatever. Nevertheless he would have liked Paul to marry Catrina Lanovitch in preference to Etta Sydney Bamborough, merely because he thought that the former loved him, while he felt sure that the latter did not. So much for the sentimental point of view—a starting point, by the way, which usually makes all the difference in a man's life. For a man needs to be loved as much as a woman needs it. From the practical point of view, Karl Steinmetz knew too much about Etta to place entire reliance on the goodness of her motives. He keenly suspected that she was marrying Paul for his money—for the position he could give her in the world.

'We must be careful,' he said. 'We must place clearly before ourselves the risks that we are running before we come to any decision. For you the risk is simply that of unofficial banishment. They can hardly send you to Siberia because you are half an Englishman; and that impertinent country has a habit of getting up and shouting when her sons are interfered with. But they can easily make Russia impossible for you. They can do you more harm than you think. They can do these poor devils of peasants of yours more harm than we can comfortably contemplate. As for me'—he paused and shrugged his great shoulders—'it means Siberia. Already I am a suspect—a *persona ingrata*.'

'I do not see how we can refuse to help Catrina,' said Paul, in a voice which Steinmetz seemed to know; for he suddenly gave in.

'As you will,' he said.

He sat up, and, drawing a small table towards him, took up a pen reflectively. Paul watched him in silence.

When the letter was finished, Steinmetz read it aloud:

'MY DEAR CATRINA,—The Moscow Doctor and your obedient servant will be (D.V.) in Thors by seven o'clock to-night. We propose spending about an hour in the village, if you will kindly advise the Starosta to be ready for us. As our time is limited, and we are much needed in Osterno, we shall have to deprive our-

selves of the pleasure of calling at the castle. The Prince sends kind remembrances, and proposes riding over to Thors to avail himself of your proffered hospitality in a day or two. With salutations to the Countess,

‘Your old friend,

‘KARL STEINMETZ.’

Steinmetz waited with the letter in his hand for Paul’s approval. ‘You see,’ he explained, ‘you are notoriously indifferent to the welfare of the peasants. It would be unnatural if you suddenly displayed so much interest as to induce you to go to Thors on a mission of charity.’

Paul nodded. ‘All right,’ he said. ‘Yes, I see; though I confess I sometimes forget what the deuce I *am* supposed to be.’

Steinmetz laughed pleasantly as he folded the letter. He rose and went to the door.

‘I will send it off,’ he said. He paused on the threshold and looked back gravely. ‘Do not forget,’ he added, ‘that Catrina Lanovitch loves you.’

CHAPTER XII.

AT THORS.

BELOW the windows of a long low stone house, in its architecture remarkably like a fortified farm—below these deep-embrasured windows the river Oster mumbled softly. One of the windows was wide open, and with the voice of the water a wonderful music rolled out to mingle and lose itself in the hum of the pine woods.

The room was a small one; beneath the artistic wall-paper one detected the outline of square-hewn stones. There were women’s things lying about; there were flowers in a bowl on a low strong table. There were a few good engravings on the wall; deep-curtained windows, low chairs, a sofa, a fan. But it was not a womanly room. The music filling it, vibrating back from the grim stone walls, was not womanly music. It was more than manly. It was not earthly, but almost divine. It happened to be Grieg, with the halting beat of a disabled, perhaps a broken, heart in it, as that master’s music usually has.

The girl was alone in the room. The presence of anyone would have silenced something that was throbbing at the back of

the chords. Quite suddenly she stopped. She knew how to play the quaint last notes. She knew something that no master had ever taught her.

She swung round on the stool and faced the light. It was afternoon—an autumn afternoon in Russia—and the pink light made the very best of a face which was not beautiful at all, never could be beautiful—a face about which even the owner, a woman, could have no possible illusion. It was broad and powerful, with eyes too far apart, forehead too broad and low, jaw too heavy, mouth too determined. The eyes were almond-shaped, and slightly sloping downwards and inwards—deep, passionate, blue eyes set in a Mongolian head. It was the face of a woman who could, morally speaking, make mincemeat of nine young men out of ten. But she could not have made one out of the number love her. For it has been decreed that women shall win love—except in some happy exceptions—by beauty only. The same unwritten law has it that a man's appearance does not matter—a law much appreciated by some of us, and duly canonised by not a few.

The girl was evidently listening. She glanced at a little golden clock on the mantelpiece, and then at the open window. She rose—she was short, and somewhat broadly built—and went to the window.

‘He will be back,’ she said to herself, ‘in a few minutes now.’

She raised her hand to her forehead, and pressed back her hair with a little movement of impatience, expressive, perhaps, of a great suspense. She stood idly drumming on the window-sill for a few moments; then, with a quick little sigh, she went back to the piano. As she moved she gave a jerk of the head from time to time, as schoolgirls who have too much hair are wont to do. The reason of this nervous movement was a wondrous plait of gold reaching far below her waist. Catrina Lanovitch almost worshipped her own hair. She knew without any doubt that not one woman in ten thousand could rival her in this feminine glory—knew it as indubitably as she knew that she was plain. The latter fact she faced with an unflinching, cold conviction which was not feminine at all. She did not say that she was hideous for the sake of hearing a contradiction or a series of saving clauses. She never spoke of it to anyone. She had grown up with it, and as it was beyond doubt, so was it outside discussion. All her femininity seemed to be concentrated, all her vanity centred, on her hair. It was her one pride, perhaps her one hope. Women have been

loved for their voices. Catrina's voice was musical enough, but it was deep and strong. It was passionate, tender if she wished, fascinating; but it was not lovable. If the voice may win love, why not the hair?

Catrina despised all men but one—that one she worshipped. She lived night and day with one great desire, beside which heaven and hell were mere words. Neither the hope of the one nor the fear of the other in any way touched or affected her desire. She wanted to make Paul Alexis love her; and, woman-like, she clung to the one womanly charm that was hers—the wonderful golden hair. Pathetic, ay, pathetic, with a grin behind the pathos, as there ever is.

She sat down at the piano, and her strong, small hands tore the heart out of each wire. There are some people who get farther into a piano than others, making the wires speak as with a voice. Catrina Lanovitch had this trick. She only played a Russian people-song—a simple lay such as one may hear issuing from the door of any 'kabak' on a summer evening. But she infused a true Russian soul into it—the soul that is cursed with a fatal power of dumb and patient endurance. She did not sway from side to side as do some people who lose themselves in the intoxication of music. But she sat quite upright, her sturdy, square shoulders motionless. Her strange eyes were fixed with the stillness of distant contemplation.

Suddenly she stopped and leaped to her feet. She did not go to the window, but stood listening beside the piano. The beat of a horse's feet on the narrow road was distinctly audible, hollow and sodden as is the sound of a wooden road. It came nearer and nearer, and a certain unsteadiness indicated that the horse was tired.

'I thought he might have come,' she whispered, and she sat down breathlessly.

When the servant came into the room a few minutes later, Catrina was at the piano.

'A letter, mademoiselle,' said the maid.

'Lay it on the table,' answered Catrina without looking round. She was playing the closing bars of a nocturne.

She rose slowly, turned, and seized the letter as a starving man seizes food. There was something almost wolf-like in her eyes.

'Steinmetz,' she exclaimed, reading the address. 'Steinmetz. Oh! why won't he write to me?'

She tore open the letter, read it, and stood holding it in her hand, looking out over the trackless pine woods with absorbed, speculative eyes. The sun had just set. The farthest ridge of pine trees stood out like the teeth of a saw in black relief on the rosy sky. Catrina Lanovitch watched the rosiness fade into pearly grey.

'Madame the Countess awaits mademoiselle for tea,' said the maid's voice suddenly in the gloom of the doorway.

'I will come.'

The village of Thors—twenty miles farther down the river Oster, twenty miles nearer to the junction of that river with the Volga—was little more than a hamlet in the days of which we write. Some day, perhaps, the three hundred souls of Thors may increase and multiply—some day when Russia is attacked by the railway fever. For Thors is on the Chorno-Ziom—the belt of black and fertile soil that runs right across the vast empire.

Karl Steinmetz, a dogged watcher of the Wandering Jew—the deathless scoffer at our Lord's agony, who shall never die, who shall leave cholera in his track wherever he may wander—Karl Steinmetz knew that the Oster was in itself a Wandering Jew. This river meandered through the lonesome country, bearing cholera germs within its waters. Whenever Osterno had cholera it sent it down the river to Thors, and so on to the Volga.

Thors lay groaning under the scourge, and the Countess Lanovitch shut herself within her stone walls, shivering with fear, begging her daughter to return to Petersburg.

It was nearly dark when Karl Steinmetz and the Moscow Doctor rode into the little village, to find the Starosta, a simple Russian farmer, awaiting them outside the 'kabak.'

Steinmetz knew the man, and immediately took command of the situation with that unquestioned sense of authority which in Russia places the 'bárin' on much the same footing as that taken by the Anglo-Indian in our Eastern empire.

'Now, Starosta,' he said, 'we have only an hour to spend in Thors. This is the Moscow Doctor. If you listen to what he tells you, you will soon have no sickness in the village. The worst houses first—and quickly. You need not be afraid, but if you do not care to come in you may stay outside.'

As they walked down the straggling village-street the Moscow Doctor told the Starosta in no measured terms, as was his wont, wherein lay the heart of the sickness. Here, as in Osterno, dirt

and neglect were at the base of all the trouble. Here, as in the larger village, the houses were more like the abode of four-footed beasts than the dwellings of human beings.

The Starosta prudently remained outside the first house to which he introduced the visitors. Paul went fearlessly in, while Steinmetz stood in the doorway holding open the door.

As he was standing there he perceived a flickering light approaching him. The light was evidently that of an ordinary hand-lantern, and from the swinging motion it was easy to divine that it was being carried by someone who was walking quickly.

'Who is this?' asked Steinmetz.

'It is likely to be the Countess Catrina, Excellency.'

Steinmetz glanced back into the cottage, which was dark save for the light of a single petroleum lamp. Paul's huge form could be dimly distinguished bending over a heap of humanity and foul clothing in a corner.

'Does she visit the cottages?' asked Steinmetz sharply.

'She does, God be with her! She has no fear. She is an angel. Without her we should all be dead.'

'She won't visit this if I can help it,' muttered Steinmetz.

The light flickered along the road towards them. In the course of a few minutes it fell on the stricken cottage, on the Starosta standing in the road, on Steinmetz in the doorway.

'Herr Steinmetz, is that you?' asked a voice, deep and musical, in the darkness.

'Zum Befehl,' answered Steinmetz without moving.

Catrina came up to him. She was clad in a long dark cloak, a dark hat, and wore no gloves. She brought with her a clean aromatic odour of disinfectants. She carried the lantern herself, while behind her walked a man-servant in livery with a large basket in either hand.

'It is good of you,' she said, 'to come to us in our need—also to persuade the good doctor to come with you.'

'It is not much that we can do,' answered Steinmetz, taking the small outstretched hand within his large soft grasp; 'but that little you may always count upon.'

'I know,' she said gravely.

She looked up at him, expecting him to step aside and allow her to pass into the cottage; but Steinmetz stood quite still, looking down at her with his pleasant smile.

'And how is it with you?' he asked, speaking in German, as they always did together.

She shrugged her shoulders.

'Oh!' she answered indifferently. 'I am well, of course. I always am. I have the strength of a horse. Of course, I have been troubled about these poor people. It has been terrible. They are worse than children. I cannot quite understand why God afflicts them so. They have never done any harm. They are not like the Jews. It seems unjust. I have been very busy, in my small way. My mother, you know, does not take much interest in things that are not clean.'

'Madame the Countess reads French novels and the fictional productions of some modern English ladies,' suggested Steinmetz quietly.

'Yes; but she objects to honest dirt,' said Catrina coldly. 'May I go in?'

Steinmetz did not move.

'I think not. This Moscow man is eccentric. He likes to do good *sub rosa*. He prefers to be alone.'

Catrina tried to look into the cottage; but Karl Steinmetz, as we know, was fat, and filled up the whole doorway.

'I should like to thank him for coming to us, or, at least, to offer him hospitality. I suppose one cannot pay him.'

'No; one cannot pay him,' answered Steinmetz gravely.

There was a little pause. From the interior of the cottage came the murmured gratitude of the peasants, broken at times by a wail of agony—the wail of a man. It is not a pleasant sound to hear. Catrina heard it, and it twisted her plain, strong face in a sudden spasm of sympathy.

Again she made an impatient little movement.

'Let me go in,' she urged. 'I may be able to help.'

Steinmetz shook his head.

'Better not!' he said. 'Besides, your life is too precious to these poor people to run unnecessary risks.'

She gave a strange, bitter laugh.

'And what about you?' she said. 'And Paul?'

'You never hear of Paul going into any of the cottages,' snapped Steinmetz sharply. 'For me it is different. You have never heard that of Paul.'

'No,' she answered slowly; 'and it is quite right. His life . . . it is different for him. How . . . how is Paul?'

‘He is well, thank you.’

Steinmetz glanced down at her. She was looking across the plains beyond the boundless pine forests that lay between Thors and the Volga.

‘Quite well,’ he went on, kindly enough. ‘He hopes to ride over and pay his respects to the Countess to-morrow or the next day.’

And the keen, kind eyes saw what they expected in the flickering light of the lamp.

At this moment Steinmetz was pushed aside from within, and a hulking young man staggered out into the road, propelled from behind with considerable vigour. After him came a shower of clothes and bedding.

‘Pah!’ exclaimed Steinmetz, spluttering. ‘*Himmel!* What filth! Be careful, Catrina!’

But Catrina had slipped past him. In an instant he had caught her by the wrist.

‘Come back!’ he cried. ‘You must not go in there.’

She was just over the threshold.

‘You have some reason for keeping me out,’ she returned, wriggling in his strong grasp. ‘I will . . . I will!’

With a twist she wrenched herself free and went into the dimly lighted room.

Almost immediately she gave a mocking laugh.

‘Paul!’ she said.

(*To be continued.*)

CIRCUIT NOTES.

NEWCASTLE, *November 19.*—Just as I come into court, this dark November morning, counsel for the prosecution is exhibiting to the jury the knife that did the deed, that let out the young girl's life. He holds it in his left hand; the blade lies in bright stainlessness against his Queen's-Counsel lawn cuffs, with Dutch cleanliness and sharpness. The court is lit by gas-jets that are out of sight above the flat ground-glass roof; the great chamber is full of a tawny haze, as though all were being looked at through dim, smoked, yellow glass. Here and there, in the crowded galleries and in the mounting hemicycle of seats behind the dock, are vivid splashes of scarlet—the prisoner's comrades, who have come to see the last of him. Burly Northumbrian policemen with long wands, the more dandified servants of the High Sheriff in yellow and black thread shoulder-knots, stand about, incurious. From the right-hand gallery, craning over the rail, hangs many a breathless pretty Newcastle girl, flutteringly drawn within the palpitating attraction of the tragedy: tender hearts beating with pity, with horror, with fearful delight. They would like to be loved like that, almost well enough to be stabbed to death; the hero then to be led unfaltering to the scaffold, fateful Julian Sorel of the Line.

And in the dock sits the protagonist. He is a young soldier, barely of age, barely full grown. He has a round, rather flat face, suffused even to the forehead with a curious uniform pink. His hair is worn in the appropriate Tommy Atkins swoop; under the haze of gas the eyes are shadowed into veritable caverns, as deep as those of the tortured *Œdipe roi*. He sits there with his head thrown slightly back, looking from witness to judge, and occasionally sidelong at the jury; he gives little dry coughs behind his hand (noticeable, the niceties of demeanour, even of the murderer), and then looks down at his boots, or up at the gallery. Perfectly unconcerned; one might fairly say, apparently the least interested person in court. And yet the young fellow is as it were already pinioned and in the hangman's grasp. In the language of the bar, 'deader case' never was. Perhaps it is his very hopelessness that takes away all his interest.

Poor Mary M.'s murder can be best described by the reverend gentleman who, unhappily, saw it. He was out on his tricycle, a July evening, getting on to half-past eight, going slowly, owing to some accident to the machine, when some distance ahead of him, in the dusk, he sees mannikin figures struggling on the ground; one of the figures lying, as he choicely says, *prone*; the other above, striking fiercely, three times, down. In the purity of the reverend gentleman's heart he takes them for choir-boys larking; just as Lord Spencer from the Viceregal Lodge thought the Phoenix Park assassins were wrestling for fun. As he draws slowly closer, the uppermost figure leaps up, and he sees it holds a knife; he sees the other figure is a woman's. 'I got off my machine,' says the reverend gentleman, in that absurd first-lesson voice most of the clergy see fit to assume, 'and I called out, "Stop him!" I pursued him some way, and seeing I could not catch him, I returned to the poor creature, who had struggled to her feet. She was bleeding profusely'; and then the old undergraduate breaks out, and he adds, quite naturally, 'awfully!—frightfully!' They carried her into the vestry of the church outside of which it all occurred, and there poor Mary almost immediately expired, within three minutes, just drawing a deep breath.

In the meantime the soldier, unpursued (in civilian clothes, but wearing a cruel red), makes his way to a neighbouring public-house and has a pot of whisky (two glasses) and sixpenn'orth of bread-and-cheese. He cleans the brand-new knife and consumes his bread-and-cheese with it. The landlord says he's quite sober, but flustered. People come in and begin to talk about the murder, and the young fellow says, 'I saw the murder; a soldier did it. I am a soldier myself.' A little later he calls for paper and pen and ink and writes out a full confession, and just before he goes he hands it to the landlord. 'Don't open it till five minutes after I've gone,' and out he saunters, about eleven o'clock.

The landlord waits, opens the paper, reads it, horror-struck, and goes for the police. At one in the morning Samuel E. is arrested close by, wandering about, with the knife open in his fist. He does not attempt to use it; gives it up at once. He asks if she is dead, and if he can see her, and they tell him to-morrow. He says: 'We had a quarrel or two behind a hedge, and then, when we got on the road and I was leaving her, she came to me and put her arms round my neck, and then the idea came into my head, and I struck her. But the reason for it shall never cross my lips.'

Truly, as his poor old father said, trembling with grief, 'Sam has done for himself this time.'

There is an air about the dead girl's father (poor child! she was only seventeen) at once dignified, sorrowful, and just, that is extremely touching. He describes himself as a labourer, but with his soldierly bearing, clipped moustache, decent black overcoat, he more suggests and resembles a retired lieutenant-colonel fallen on evil days, his savings lost through the failure of a bank. There is a manly ring in his voice, an evident desire to tell nothing but the truth, an evident appreciation of the terrible position of the man in the dock, that makes his figure almost heroic. And yet there can be nothing about him of that dismal insensibility one finds so often in the lower orders—not fortitude, any more than the Indian's is fortitude, but sheer, blank vacancy of feeling; for I am told of a scene at his daughter's graveside when he stood there, solitary and tremendous, calling down vengeance on the murderer, vowing himself to the lawful pursuit. He wants nothing but the law, will tell nothing but the strict truth. 'My daughter and the prisoner seemed on very good terms,' he says; 'they had no words; they were very affectionate; they were to have been married.'

If Samuel E. does not tell us the reason why he did it, we shall never learn it now. He was at tea at the house on the Sunday, when they were all on the best of terms. On the Monday he came over from Strensall Camp, bought a civilian's suit, and hid his uniform under a hedge; in the afternoon, he bought a knife and had it sharpened in the shop. 'I told him it was quite sharp enough for ordinary purposes,' says the shopkeeper, 'but he insisted on having it further sharpened.' He told the police he had meant to kill the girl on the Sunday, but after an explanation with her on Tynemouth Pier had been apparently satisfied, and, in token of it, had thrown his bayonet into the sea. Strange form of reconciliation between lovers! And still the idea, the idea that the only sure way of keeping her to himself was to kill her, beats, bat-like, in that poor blunt head. He can't get away from it, the mysterious overlapping of the two passions of love and hate, the desire of Othello for the life of Desdemona, the animal instinct that drives the rabbit and the rat to devour its young. He is jealous, but not overwhelmingly so; not more than Edwin ever is of Angelina in decorous South Kensington. One reads in his boyish scrawls from Strensall vague threats of his

coming over when she least expects it, of his having been told of her walking about with 'two Scotch fellers;' but that is all. At such times, in decorous stucco South Kensington, when Angelina dances more than twice with another, Edwin gnashes his teeth and goes off to the refreshment-room; it never occurs to him to go to the stores (with somebody else's ticket) and buy a knife. It seems to be just the difference in the shape of their heads, their chances of education, the being brought up amongst 'nice people,' to whom murder and violence are as foreign a notion as cold poison. It's very hard, isn't it, to be hanged for the shape of one's skull?

And so the trial goes on, the witnesses come and go. Witnesses from the public-house, gossips, Mrs. Quickly, Mrs. Cluppins, with ridiculous broad faces, absolutely expressionless as the fat wife's who ambles in the sweltering heat of Hogarth's print of 'Afternoon.' They say things that occasionally raise a titter. The woman who sold the civilian suit corrects counsel when he says he believes she keeps an old-clothes shop. 'Not an old-clothes shop; I am a wardrobe-dealer.' Even the prisoner smiles. He looks quite cheerful, merry, boyish.

As the morning wears away I look round the court: at the reporters, one with a head strikingly resembling the bust of Michael Angelo, and others young and smart, with the fashionable turn-down collars and a general detached air of only just doing a little reporting on the way to something more worthy of their style and talents; at the jury, with all the different types: the inattentive, the puzzled, the sympathetic, the angry, the conscientious who takes notes, the bored who yawns and smooths his hair. They look neither particularly attentive nor over-intelligent, but somehow those twelve rather dull men almost invariably manage to arrive at the truth. Juries very rarely make a mistake, unless it be on what one may fairly call the right side. I have occasionally heard a wrongful acquittal, never a wrongful conviction.

And down among the solicitors sits somebody's little boy, who has been brought into court to see the man tried for his life. He looks like Phiz's drawing of David Copperfield—Dickens himself at twelve must have looked just like that, with his rough, bright hair, his pretty colour, his rapt expression. He wears a chrysanthemum in his buttonhole, and he never takes his eyes off the witnesses, nor off his lordship's grave face when, under the pendulous black cap, he carries out the inevitable verdict of the jury and sentences the prisoner to death.

Samuel E. has nothing to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced on him according to law. At the chaplain's deep *Amen!* he turns to leave the dock, nods brightly, and smiles to the comrades who stand up to see him descend the stairs, down to the cells below the court, out of their sight for ever.

I hear afterwards that he dies with perfect coolness, without bravado, but with complete calm; that the pink colour never leaves his face, even when he stands on the scaffold. And he never gives the reason.

As I stroll up to lodgings I hear the newspaper-boys in Grey Street shouting out the verdict, and I meet the little chap from the solicitors' seats, walking about with his hand in his father's. His expression is as rapt and angelic as ever, but the chrysanthemum droops fatefully. . . .

I heard last night as strange a true tale of circumstantial evidence as ever was disbelieved in an impossible shilling shocker.

Eccola! Murder committed in the North of England, murderer undiscovered, case being rapidly forgotten, passing away (important clues and all) into the limbo of undiscovered crime. The actual perpetrator is in prison for some other offence in the South (the general explanation, by the way, of undiscovered crime), and there, wearying of his life and the unremitting attentions of the warders, he confesses to the murder and demands to be hanged and set at rest.

I sometimes think that, if ever I commit a murder, the first step I shall take towards completely averting suspicion will be to go and give myself up for it at the nearest police-station. The police appear to have so inherent a dislike to anyone discovering anything but themselves, have such a deep contempt for the methods of the amateur (even the amateur-perpetrator), that nothing is more difficult than to get oneself arrested, much less tried, on one's own initiative. The sergeant refuses to take the charge, declares from your natural agitation you have been drinking heavily the past few weeks, or suffer from delusions; and, instead of being taken as of right to a cell, you are conducted to the door, with the polite intimation that you must think yourself lucky for not getting into serious trouble as the originator of a false charge and the laying of further burdens of investigation on the shoulders of a much-overworked and highly intelligent body.

Such seemed likely to be the disposal of the murderer confessed from the South when they brought him up to be tried in the

North. Nobody believed him. I imagine he would have been acquitted, with a solemn warning from his lordship on the rude folly of taking up the valuable time of the court, when actually (I believe during the course of the proceedings) a morning bather in the Serpentine struck his head or his heel, diving, against the murdered man's pocket-book, where it had been thrown two years before, almost immediately after the perpetration of the crime, by the murderer. It had lain two years in the Serpentine waters, overpassed by many a morning and evening head and heel; and in the pocket of it they found, plainly legible, a full and particular account of the crime, in the handwriting of the man who afterwards confessed to it.

That would be a little crude, perhaps, in Mr. Arrowsmith's series; but, such as it is, the writers of shockers are very welcome to it. Though I don't say it is possible, I affirm it to be true.

DURHAM, November 22.—The fat and uneasy young man in the dock quivers like a jelly, and rubs one hand uneasily over another between the spikes. He is being tried for bigamy. He was arrested just as he was leaving the country. 'It's a good job you caught me,' he naively remarks to the inspector. 'I was just off to South Africa.' *Semper aliquid novi refert Africa.*

Bigamy looms large in a theatrical sense, but, regarded closely, in nine cases out of ten it really comes to very little. Prisoner has a violent quarrel with his wife (faults on both sides), and they arrange to part, for better, for worse. He has employment as travelling bill-inspector for the pantomime, and, going home late one night, he meets a poor Tearsheet, whom he questions as to her distress. He learns this and that, and, mainly, that she wants to go home to her people. He takes her home, and a tenderness springs up between them; after a little queer courting, he marries her—that is, goes through the ceremony, thinking he sufficiently protects himself against the law by telling her and her people that he is married already. Perfectly clear, the ceremony is gone through for respectability's sake alone, and, in their estimation, has nothing sacramental about it.

The second wife (Tearsheet married and done for) keeps conveniently out of the way; doesn't appear before us in court at all. Her stepfather swears positively he'd no idea the prisoner was already married. He is seized with almost complete deafness in cross-examination, in the manner of witnesses who don't want to hear too much. He may swear what he likes, like Benedick

talking, but nobody marks him. Somehow, let a witness swear what he will, there is that about truth that stands out even in the witness-box. It is perfectly clear he knew all about it, and was glad to get Tearsheet off his hands at any price.

I meet him afterwards outside the court, eating a stale bun out of a paper bag, greatly dissatisfied with the world and the course of justice therein, grumbling between the mouthfuls to a female friend.

For the defence they call the prisoner's mother and wife. The mother is an old dame, dressed in black beaded bonnet and a striped black jacket, with a weary criss-crossed face of tired trouble. She says she went to Tearsheet's home and told them all her son was already another's. She is evidently speaking the truth. The prisoner's wife makes a touching little appeal to be allowed to take her fat young man home unpunished. As she turns her head I see a pulse in her throat, beating like a small heart, speaking eloquently to her woe. Two of her children are very ill, she says; she doesn't believe one of them will be alive on her return. The fat young man quivers dolorously and, rubbing his hands, looks up at the judge like a puppy that doesn't know whether he's going to be beaten or caressed.

For the result, he is mercifully released on his own recognisances of 50*l.* to come up for judgment if called upon. He looks round with alacrity for his hat, and steps out of the dock to rejoin his little wife, with her broad felt hat and sharp nose. Let us hope they will agree together better in future; that there will be no more what she calls 'clashes about women;' that the fat young man will keep his quivering sensibility within lawful bounds. Knight-errantry can so easily become an illicit calling.

Friday.—The deputy-clerk of assize calls in clear herald tones, 'Thomas Leinster Sinclair, come forth and surrender yourself, or you will forfeit your recognisances.' He calls it, rather half-heartedly, three times. Not a sign in court of Thomas Leinster Sinclair; not a sound, except the dry, incredulous cough of a county policeman. 'What's the good of that nonsense?' the cough seems to say; 'Sinclair was seen in Liverpool on Monday. Why, he's in mid-Atlantic by now. Get on with something else, do!'

Then the deputy-clerk calls thrice on the bail: 'Matthew Thompson and Thomas Edward Brigham, come forth and produce the body of Thomas Leinster Sinclair, or you will forfeit your

recognisances.' But the bail, not having the body, cannot produce it. They look uncommonly piteous; as well they may, having pledged themselves for Sinclair's appearance to the tune of 250*l.* apiece.

I am sorry we shall not have the satisfaction of trying Mr. Sinclair, for the crime with which he is charged, and his method of executing it (always supposing him guilty), are neither of them without interest—savouring, indeed, again of our young friend the shocker.

He is charged with setting fire to the steamship of which he is part owner; and on the principle that if you want a thing done you should do it yourself (especially a crime), it is asserted he disguised himself, and so successfully that, undetected, he moved among his own crew, and in the silent watches off Flamborough Head so knowingly arranged the paraffin and the esparto grass down in the hold—why, one can see it all from here, as our lively neighbours say.

To reduce the story to briefest outline, it is this. Steamship arrives in London Docks from the Mediterranean on the Tuesday; and on the Wednesday, Sinclair, who has come down from Newcastle in his character of part owner, goes on board her. There are certain affairs to regulate: the captain has died on the way out to Lisbon, and so on; but once they are over Sinclair leaves, to go home to Newcastle by rail, merely mentioning casually to the new captain as he goes that he has given a passage from the Thames to the Tyne to a respectable man—'deaf and dumb, by the way, captain'—who will come on board next day, the Thursday, just before she leaves the river. Will the captain give him the second mate's berth aft? Captain gives sailor-like nod, and away goes Sinclair, presumably homewards to Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Next day (Thursday afternoon, March 1), about five, there steps on board the respectable deaf and dumb passenger. He wears a beard, a cloth cap, coat collar turned up, rug round his shoulders, rather muffling the lower part of his face. He blandly hands his letter of recommendation from Sinclair to the mate, as though he believed him to be the captain (not a bad piece of business that!), and then, on being motioned, to the captain himself. The letter remarks, by the way, that the respectable man is dumb, but not deaf; Sinclair, apparently, having reconsidered the advisability of not over-inflicting himself; always supposing Sinclair and the passenger to be one and the same, as

the Crown asserts, and would have liked to have had the chance of proving.

The passenger, though respectable, is lonely and obscure. Naturally, he cannot speak, but when addressed by cheerful and communicative tars he emits morose noises from the back of the throat that much distress them. The day he chiefly spends sitting on his berth, wrapped in his rug; once only so far forgetting himself (according to the black cook) as to bid him enter when he knocks with tea. The night he mostly spends on deck, wandering about, a humped figure, either vainly searching for his lost voice among the many wandering tones of ocean, or (as the prosecution suspect) looking for a likely spot to drop the paraffin among the esparto grass. Early on Saturday morning the fire breaks out. The sea is calm, they are not far from the shore, boats are plentiful; however devouring the flames, there is not much danger, even for a poor dumb passenger. Hatches are battened down, and the steamship, still afire, reaches the Tyne in safety on Saturday afternoon. Thereupon, mysteriously as he came on board, mysteriously disappears the respectable passenger. He waits not to thank the captain for his hospitality; no one even sees him go. From that time to this no trace of the man who is dumb but not deaf has been discovered. Sinclair, on being interrogated, says he understood he was a commercial traveller; he met him by accident in a restaurant in the city, when he presented him with a letter begging a passage. *Credat Judæus*. Why, a commercial traveller, however respectable, can scarcely get along without a voice; one might as well believe in the existence of a dumb auctioneer.

Coincident with the disappearance of the passenger, Sinclair turns up in a waterside public-house, dirty, shaky, unshorn, demanding whisky, drinking it neat. One of his crew even meets him shortly, and tells him of the misfortune to the ship of which he is part owner. He was not so much moved as one might expect; he says he will go down and have a look at her to-morrow. For the rest—

Nay, dry the starting tear; she was heavily insured.

All might yet be well if Sinclair would only tell us, like Lazarus, where he was those three days—Thursday, Friday, Saturday. He has a tale, of course, but really, in the language of the people, it won't wash. He says that on Thursday afternoon he was going down to Woolwich; that he went for refreshment

at Cannon Street into the second-class refreshment-room (where an intelligent officer has discovered there isn't such a thing), that coming out he fell into clutches seductive, disreputable, was carried off N., and abode there till Saturday morning, when, sick and shivering, he took the train home from King's Cross, and reached Newcastle just in time to meet his petty officer with the news of the fire. All Friday he was so bad he kept the house, and even sent for the doctor. So he says.

Thomas Leinster Sinclair, all may yet be well if only you will give us the name and address of your doctor, some other indication of the part of the town that sheltered you than the vague letter N. Why, N. is no more use to us than M.

But Sinclair prefers to borrow 50*l.* from his trusting bail 'for legal expenses,' and to be seen with it in Liverpool on the Monday. He is polite enough to write his lordship the judge of assize a letter in which he is 'deeply sorry that I shall not stand before you on Thursday, as the rapid accumulation of worry has caused my Brain-power to give in,' ending with the poetic announcement: 'therefore, with the deepest Regret, I efface myself from the world;' which may mean anything from an alias to growing a beard, but, seeing the 50*l.*, scarcely portends suicide. His lordship's reply is to immediately issue a bench warrant for his arrest, and we get on to something else.

YORK, *November 29.*—The sun streams into court in broad and genial patches. It is so like Nature to lose the opportunity of being really effective, for the sunlight always avoids the dock. Perhaps the luminary thinks that, amid all this mere crowd of coiners, burglars, thieves, stack-firers, sacrilegists, there is no one of sufficient eminence to throw his shafts at, Haymarket Theatre fashion.

They succeed each other rapidly, utility men and women on the huge stage of crime. Battered females who weep, who have come to it through drink, who curtsy with mouldy gentility when they get four months; a pianist at a free-and-easy in a red shawl who, merely to oblige a friend, sold a stolen watch; a shy servant-girl in a broad straw hat, for breaking and entering her late master's house and carrying off clocks and clothes; a decent post-mistress in black, with a comfortable, cook-like air, who, trade being bad at her little shop, has been abstracting coin from the letters entrusted to her. Counsel delivers a flowery debating-society harangue on her behalf, by which he makes it clear that

the real criminals are the public, for putting temptation in the way of respectable officials by sending registered letters. If there were no registered letters, there would be no thieves. Counsel gives me the impression of thinking a good deal more of the selection of his phrases and the rounding of his periods than of his client, who, when at last he sits down, gets twelve months for his pains. Succeeded by a sturdy rogue who, being benighted, broke into a church and drank the sacramental wine (any port in a storm), and, not content with that, made himself up a bed in the vestry on the crisp and immaculate surplices. Impudent fellow! eighteen months. And yet sacrilege seems a heavy gun to bring to bear upon a man just for procuring himself a night's lodging; while arson scarcely seems fairly to describe the misadventure of John Cyrill, who has fired his master's stack. He is a startled-looking youth with fresh cheeks and long ridges of terror on his forehead. He says he was going to his master's farm 'to take some curd cans and baskets,' and he just stopped behind the stack to light a cigarette. [It appears that all the hinds in these parts smoke cigarettes.] He threw away the match, carelessly enough, into the stack, which instantly flamed; into the stack also, in panic, went the cigarette. When the police and the brigade came, there was John Cyrill standing by, with chattering jaw, too frightened to explain what a mere accident it all was. The intelligent officer, struck with such manifest evidence of guilt, at once arrested him. 'I charged him with wilf'ly and felawnously setting fire to the stack.' But the jury think otherwise, and at once acquit him; whereupon John Cyrill's lines of terror disappear, and he steps out of the dock, to be embraced by an agitated mother, and we get on to something else. . . .

Now, in almost every circuit town you go to, in every part of the country, the grand jury make a presentment that the lash should be inflicted on these hideous ruffians who assault women and children. I am amazed that the presentment, after going through the farce of being forwarded to what is called the proper quarter, is never acted on, never even paid any further attention to, so far as I know. In the present state of the law the lash can only be given for robbery with violence, and the terror in which it is held is evident from the fact that, though the robber will often plead guilty to the robbery, he will always deny the violence with all the blasphemy of which he is master. Only yesterday a couple of scoundrels who had robbed and assaulted an

old man, admitted the robbery, but called on the Creator to 'strike them stiff' if they had been guilty of any violence. They knew very well that would lay them open to be flogged.

December 1.—At York we have three murders; altogether, a heavier assize than has been known here for years. All over the country it's the same story; at this present moment there are no less than six men lying under sentence of death on the different circuits. I imagine this recrudescence of crimes of violence is in a great measure due to the wet summer. Men can't get out of doors; they go to the public-houses, they drink heavily, and if they don't start fighting there, they carry their 'nasty tempers' home to wives grown irritable, from want of sunshine, in damp cottages. Let anyone test his own feelings in constant rain in August and September, and then translate them, for heightening purposes, into close interiors, crowded with wet children and all the discomforts of a small home. Men given to violence brood more in wet weather, and, as boots grow mildewed, so in such minds there springs a fungus that impels to crime.

So was it, doubtless, with Stonehouse, who sits in the dock charged with the murder of his wife. He wears the pallid mask of Laocoon, the same tense, half-opened mouth and ridged forehead. All day he sits, in ghastly struggle with the hangman's rope in place of the sea-serpent. When, finally, a merciful jury convict him of manslaughter only, and the rope falls away, you see Laocoon as he might have looked if he had won in the desperate encounter, and, with his boys, watched the baffled monsters cleave once more the blue waters of the *Ægean*. When he hears the verdict he closes his mouth, the face clears, he looks twenty years younger.

Not so fortunate David Bell, charged with killing his landlady at Middlesbrough. He won't sit down; in his heavy overcoat, he prefers all day to stand, turning his sound ear towards the jury and the witnesses, sheltering it with his hand. Poor squat man, struggling with tears, shaken sometimes with his grief; his is the head of a burgomaster by Franz Hals, without the *bonhomie*.

He was a lodger in the dead woman's house, on the best of terms with her and her children, often giving them presents. Little daughter Nellie, with heavy, swimming eyes, dressed in crape by the kind neighbours, says they were sitting by the fire in the front room, her mother sewing, Mr. Bell studying the paper in a Cardigan jacket, she with scarlet cheeks reading over

the coals, her brother, the boilermith, gone out; for though it had been a wet evening, at a quarter to eight it was 'just fairing-up.' Something was said about houses and getting married, and she heard her mother, a very quick-tempered woman, mutter, she would not think of marrying 'such a thing as you.' And then Nellie takes her delightful book to bed with her, and a little later, before nine, hearing a sort of scraping noise, creeps downstairs to find her mother dead on the hearthrug, and Bell gone.

Jane Ayres, the neighbour, with her honest mottled face, red comforter, and knitted shawl, breaks into honest tears as she describes how the prisoner came rushing in, horror-struck, to implore help. She was too frightened to go in, and waited for the return of her husband, who comes at once; while, meantime, Bell goes off and finds a policeman. He has known the policeman twenty-two years; they call each other Josh and David. At the station the policeman says to the sergeant: 'Here's a bad job; here's Bell killed his landlady!' 'You don't say so,' remarks the sergeant, stolidly enough. Whereupon Bell, 'It's too true. I've done the job. Poor Annie! poor lass! it's done,' and breaks into tempestuous weeping.

December 3.—If Bell's crime is more or less inexplicable, there can be no doubt of the motive for Arthur Kendall's; it was revenge, that 'sort of wild justice.' Here are the facts. Crossland, tried and acquitted at the summer York Assizes, had done all he could to shift the offence, a very gross and horrible one, on to Kendall's shoulders. Acquitted of it, as I say, Crossland steps out of the dock, while Kendall, failing human justice, determines to execute the criminal himself. All that night, the 23rd of July, he searches for him, revolver in pocket; while Crossland, suspecting apparently some such attempt, doesn't sleep at his own home, but spends the night at a friend's, one Russell, for whose murder Kendall is now being tried. A terrible bitterness that, to start out to kill your foe, to kill the wrong man, to have your foe appear against you as principal witness, sound and well; except for the sort of permanent dimple in his cheek where the bullet entered that only broke his jaw, only silenced him for a time instead of for ever.

Such is Arthur Kendall's fate, who is described in the calendar as a clerk, one-and-twenty years of age, well educated. He is a determined-looking young fellow, with high cheek-bones, of somewhat Swedish appearance. He stands during the whole of the

trial, and sends down constant pencil notes to his counsel. Crossland is a short, thick man, with a chin beard, a sort of cross between a costermonger and a Deal boatman. The permanent dimple in his cheek of Kendall's bullet is very noticeable; almost like a star in a plate-glass window fractured by a stone. Kendall has marked his man for life, if he has done nothing else.

There's a shrewd old shoemaker who appears before us as witness, in appearance half pantaloon and half Chinchilla monkey, who saw the whole affair when, next morning, the 24th, Kendall at last found his foe, in Russell's company, at work down at Hull docks, where they were both employed. He saw Kendall go up to Crossland and say something ('Do you charge me with this?'); he saw Crossland turn away ('I don't want to have anything whatever to say to you'). Then he sees Kendall fire right in Crossland's face, who stumbles and half falls; Russell comes at him with a spanner, and Kendall fires at him, not before Russell had struck him heavily. Crossland gets up and runs away, screaming Murder, round one of the outhouses, pursued by Kendall, firing two more barrels, but missing. At a heap of stones he stumbles and falls. Something goes wrong with the revolver: it seems to think enough has been done, for it won't go off. Kendall stands over Crossland, screaming and crawling; Kendall, blind and impotent, clicking the trigger. Then help comes, and Kendall is seized; one of the witnesses says he has to bite his hand to make him give up the revolver.

Dire Dantesque procession over the dock bridge: Kendall, streaming with blood from the blow from the spanner; Crossland, assisted, in speechless agony, with a fractured jaw; Russell, carried, put into a cab, driven funereally to the infirmary, where a day or two later he dies. See to what a pass revenge, that 'sort of wild justice,' may lead a man who conceives himself wronged, who owns a revolver, who has lived two years in America.

One of the witnesses, by the way, who saw the latter part of the encounter, and helped seize Kendall, is a rather handsome, uneasy young man, who describes himself as a waiter out of employment. He is not long in finding employment again, for a week later I see him assisting at the Law Students Society's dinner at Leeds, calmly handling the vegetable dishes instead of a half-crazed murderer. So, after assisting at a tragedy, one falls back again into those ordinary duties of which, mercifully, our life is so largely composed.

When I get back to court at seven o'clock everyone is trooping away out into the dim and windy night. The pavement is wet in the glistening gaslight. Between the court and the castle, that is now the prison, there are, perhaps, thirty paces that lead to the sombre little door in the ancient wall, behind which lies so much misery and degradation. It is so close to the court that the warders just walk across with prisoners to be tried, back with them if condemned, merely holding them by the arm. In the gloom outside the gaslight I see dark figures of police and warders moving across to the squat, despairing door. The door is so small, the wall above so very high. And among them moves a grey patch. It is Arthur Kendall, in the clothes in which he did the deed. The door opens; he goes in alone with the warder. It is closed, and the police troop back. He is condemned.

December 4.—There's a small oval pane of glass let into the courthouse door, something like a club billiard-room arrangement to enable you to wait for the stroke, through which I can look in and see what they are doing. The assize draws to a close; it is almost the last case; the court is half-empty. The police are yawning; one of the counsel is fast asleep, clutching a brief, dreaming of the shoot he has been obliged to miss while waiting for his case to come on.

The prisoner in the dock is talking to the jury; I can see his thin lips move. He stands just against and under the creamy gas globe that tops the iron bar at the end of the dock, between him and the men he is addressing. He wears a faded light coat with the collar turned up; his fleshless wrists protrude, and with bony, knotted hands he clutches the dock-rail. The face is small-featured and drawn—the face of a spy, a traitor; there is something unutterably base about it, and at the same time Italian—a Florentine villain, pandar to the Grand Duke, by Della Robbia. The narrow skull, with its boss behind, is covered with a dusty, clipped down; a thin growth of hair sprouts over his lips and hollow cheeks.

As I open the door the voice is borne to me in dismal creaking accents of faded false refinement—the refinement of a broken-down lecturer on electro-biology. He begins to cry; he says it is all due to misfortune and opium.

Abhorred of men, beyond the pale of any possible human mercy, he goes to penal servitude for eight years. He shuffles away with round back; he gives me the impression of having

slippers on. And the counsel, who has been fast asleep, dreaming of the covert-side, gets up and shouts, 'May it please your Lordship! Gentlemen of the jury——' in tones of morning briskness that bring fresh air, and youth, and hope back into the drowsy, frowsy, crime-haunted old court.

LEEDS, December 7.—It is a relief to get back onto the civil side once more, with its placidity, its trivial disputes, its amazing *quodlibets* and *quidlibets*; summing up therein, somewhat loosely, all legal technicalities of affidavit, and Order XIV., and the rest of it. What a pleasant change from 'wounding with intent to kill' to the young man who has been merely slandered! 'Thou art a young thief and a rascal!' are the precise words Mr. Brown used of him. They have a pleasant Shakespearean flavour, but they cannot be justified nor glossed. Mr. Brown won't withdraw them; he even repeats them, stolidly smoking in the bar-parlour. He snaps his fingers at solicitor's letters, he cheerfully accepts service of the writ, but he doesn't put in an appearance in court. So the young man gets 5*l.* damages, and seems to think he ought to have had more. For my part, I hereby give Mr. Brown notice that if he pleases to call me a young thief and a rascal, and will pay 5*l.* for the luxury, he is welcome to do it as often as the fancy takes him.

And next a dismal action about nails—whether they were rusty or not when sold; wherein the plaintiff much obscures the clearness of his evidence, and, I fancy, rather prejudices the jury against him (I know he prejudiced me) by being violently shaken by volleys of hiccoughs. Nervousness, I suppose. Verdict, more or less, for the defendant. And after him a libel action between country doctors and a bone-setter. The bone-setter is an elderly farmer with the head of a minor prophet and a battered tin ear-trumpet like a cow's horn. He has done a brisk trade in the countryside for years at three and four shillings a job, and has always been at loggerheads with the 'duly qualified medical men' of the neighbourhood. Now that he is waxing old his daughter helps him—wrenches joints, breaks bones, resets them, just like a man. She is a rough-coloured, confident, rather good-looking young person, with powerful hands. The libel was quite unjustified, and the doctors get 30*l.* damages.

Once we are set thoroughly going the cause list shows signs, as it always does, of melting away. Cases are settled out of court, breaches of promise (I regret to say) disappear, jurors are withdrawn, defendants don't show up. Still there is enough to keep

us employed for a fortnight, while on the Crown side I hear there are a hundred and fourteen prisoners.

Here in the civil court we are so quiet, almost so listless, that I can hear the tuning of the great organ outside in the Victoria Hall.

December 15.—Libel and slander between gravediggers—whether the flowers on a grave were kept in proper order; a railway case—claim by an exceedingly depressed sanitary inspector for shock to his system by the undue starting of a train; quarrel between builders and architects; quarrel between showmen as to whether the tent hired was fit and proper for the ‘Vanishing Lady;’ disputes about a wall, about ancient lights, about bills of exchange and bills of sale; libel by one alderman on another, delivered in a speech at a ward meeting, wherein one gets a fair notion of the intensity of the *odium politicum* in a country town; and, finally, a cause with which we get ‘stuck’ for over two days, all about a village green—whether it is waste of the manor, and so belongs to the lord thereof, or whether it is defendant Lister’s, who claims to have dried his linen on it for years, as owner. The back benches for two days are crowded with ancient inhabitants, giving clear and deliberate evidence both ways. They are all very old and very deaf, with heads like carved Nuremberg pipes: Snug and Bottom, and Snout and Starveling, hinds and farmers, and pig-jobbers and dealers generally. One old body can’t tell the time, and doesn’t know how many pence there are in a shilling; and one, as a reason for telling the truth, declares he’s too old to begin to lie. *Nos bons villageois!*

If it all gets a little dull, I stroll over to the other court, where I find the familiar highly charged atmosphere, the galleries full of breathless girls looking down on the man in the dock, who sits there despairingly with his head in his hands. The usual policeman is giving evidence. ‘I rested the pris’ner, and I charged him with wilf’ly and felawnously,’ &c., &c.

Last night I heard a story so droll that, at the risk of getting somebody into trouble, of even a Government inquiry, I cannot forbear from telling it. I don’t know the date, and I take upon myself to forget the name of the town; enough that it is one of those places for sessions where the court meets once a year, at other times the business going elsewhere, so as to give them all a turn.

The court was just rising, the presiding magistrate declaring

'Well, that concludes the business,' when from the back of the court rose some disturbing noise. The magistrate, overhearing it (as he could not fail to, for the court at B—— is small), conceived that the majesty of the law was being outraged, and ordered the bailiff instantly to produce before them the author.

The bailiff hales forward a retiring rustic who is understood to say his name is Pears. 'Pears,' says the presiding magistrate, trembling with indignation, 'you have been guilty of one of the grossest contempts of court it ever fell to my lot to witness. You will go to prison.' The other magistrates nod approvingly, the court breaks up, and the unhappy Pears is consigned to the lowest dungeon in B—— gaol, and totally forgotten.

Another year rolls away, as they say in novels, and again the sessions meet at B——. Again the court is just rising, the presiding magistrate declaring, 'Well, that concludes the business,' when the bailiff, advancing timidly (not so sure that he himself is not guilty of contempt), ventures respectfully to ask, 'May it please your honour, what are we to do with Pears?'

It takes the magistrates some little time to realise their position, but when they do they are equal to it. They hasten to make a collection among themselves on the Bench, and they call forward Pears, who has the vague apprehension he is going to be hanged. 'Pears,' says the presiding magistrate, his voice broken with emotion, 'we have been talking over your case, and are inclined to deal with you mercifully.' Pears touches his forehead vacantly. 'You have been a year in prison; you are a young man, and we are unwilling entirely to blast your future. We hope it will all be a lesson to you, and that henceforth you will try and do better. We—er—have made a little collection for you, and we—er—hope it will give you a new start in life.' And the amazed Pears, instead of finding himself in the condemned cell, holds out his hands to receive some 15*l*. So the court breaks up in apprehensive agitation, and Pears goes home to his wife, who was not sorry at his disappearance, but is very glad to see him return with 15*l*.

On what principle he was left to languish for a year in gaol I cannot tell, unless it be that *de minimis non curat lex*.

SLIGACHAN AND THE COOLINS.

IN due time, having surfeited on purple peaks and grey islets, and having, like other enthusiasts of the romantic in nature, dozed snugly in the sun when our eyes ought to have been most on the alert, the pinnacled Coolins appeared to us and we were landed at Portree. The capital of Skye looked almost too fair and peaceful. A man well trained in the hard school of experience could not but fancy there must be a set-off to its caressing charms. Two white-sailed yachts swayed in its blue bay, and the green of the wooded knolls about the harbour was at its brightest under the unclouded sun. We were short of things, however (drugs, *inter alia*), and we wished to investigate the Portree shops. Vain aspiration! The shops were all shut, though it was barely evening. There was a strange sense of abnormal population about the streets and sea-walks, and the cracked voice of an old man with whiskers like Ibsen's sounded from a principal corner in a Moody and Sankey solo. In effect, it was a day of preparation for the Sacrament. This explained the looks of pious *ennui* on the faces of the young men, who stood about in their Sabbath clothes, with their hands in their pockets. It also explained the demure expressions of the lassies, who passed the idlers by without so much as one upward peep. And it explained further the presence of a number of uncouth but exceedingly picturesque persons from the country, who seemed almost overcome by the magnificence of such shreds of the glories of town life as even Portree under these restrained conditions afforded them. The lobster-red countenances of the rural dames went well with the penitential and utter black of their attire.

As the apothecary quite declined to imperil his soul by serving us with anything, we left Portree to itself. We were, of course, bound for Sligachan; and the seven-mile walk in the gayest and sweetest hours of the day was something to anticipate with subdued rapture. Nothing could have been more serene and kind than the look of the sky at starting. We had such faith in it that we left even our macintoshes to follow us by the mail-cart. We had the sparkling Portree loch on the one hand for a while; heather, honeysuckle, and grey hills on the other. The air was

odorous and mild. But ere an hour had passed and the gaunt shapes of the Coolins had stepped measurably nearer to us, dire clouds began to thicken about the mountains. And in the end we splashed to the portal of the Sligachan Hotel in a truly compassionate state. For an hour we had had to feel our way through the thick ribs of rain that pelted us, helped all too frequently by the lamps of the lightning, and unnerved by the thunder-claps echoing and re-echoing among the dark precipices of the hills. There is a little exaggeration here, but not so much as you would imagine.

Anyhow, I have seldom seen such rain, and never have I been made so miserable by 'clouds in dissolution.' There were about thirty persons dining as we passed their room window towards the porch. Stepping as we did from the midst of the storm and half darkness, we must have moved their pity. The hotel was full. We spent the night in the smoke-room, on camp beds uneasy enough to have dissatisfied a Spartan general. Our atmosphere was a fell compound of stale tobacco, peat reek, and half-dried coats, waistcoats, and trousers, several suits of which hung about the fireplace. Outside, the night was wild. The wind bellowed without pause, and the rain volleyed against the panes as if it would surely smash them.

Sligachan must be described. It is one of the most remarkable little spots in Great Britain, and may be said to hold the Coolins as its monopoly.

It is just a whitewashed old cottage, with wing added to wing. Its farthest wing north is the beginning of outbuildings, stables, and the like. The mountains south and east embrace it, but not closely. From its windows you may see the gleam of the head of Loch Sligachan, an arm of the sea three miles long. When the waterfalls on Ben Lee show thick and white from the Sligachan breakfast-table, the Sligachan anglers hurry over their fresh herrings and ham and eggs, and start off with their rods. Ben Glamaig, an isosceles triangle of a hill 2,587 feet high, fronts the house to the east. To the man heedless of the superior charms of rock-edges and needles, Glamaig is one of the most pleasing mountains in the north. Of course it is quite without trees (it is part of a deer forest); where it is not crimson with heather or green with grass it is a delicate grey which changes its tones wonderfully with the weather. But Glamaig is really nothing to the Coolins proper. These are to the south of the hotel, and if your bedroom looks in their direction

you may be congratulated. Scour na Gillean, the master peak, is less than three miles from your washhand-basin.

The immediate neighbourhood of Sligachan is nothing but moorland and watercourses. There could not be a more lonely spot. But with the silver of the loch in one direction and the majestic mountain-tops dominant in other directions, it is impossible to cavil at the place for its dreariness.

One comes here at first much disposed to pick holes in the Coolins' reputation for sublimity. They are such a very limited mountain range. Conceive them as a semicircle of crags some ten miles in diameter, and with one radiating spoke of peaks besides. This last combines with the lower curve of the range to enclose the Loch Coruisk, about which Scott and others have written memorable words. The summits of the mountains are singularly uniform in altitude, all being about three thousand feet high. But this said, all that can be said in abatement of their grandeur has been said. Probably nowhere in the world is there such a collection of pinnacles and weather-worn needles of rock in so small a compass. And north and south they rise from the moor and the sea with an abruptness that startles.

They are not to be made acquaintance with lightly. One soon learns this much from the verbal testimony of one's fellow-guests at Sligachan. The Alpine ropes in the hotel vestibule tell the same tale. So do the cut and scarred hands and attenuated breeches of the men who, over Talisker, in the smoke-room, narrate their exploits among the pinnacles and edges. Like enough, too, as in our case, the wild weather which veils their crests and holds their nether reaches in a bond of fearsome shadow, from out which white cataracts roll to the valleys, tells the same tale. A man may only too easily get himself into a predicament here from which his nerves decline without strong coercion to allow him to attempt to release himself.

For ourselves, we did not see Scour na Gillean's summit until the third day. But we had by then already become familiar with his eastern spur, which drops nobly into the execrable Glen Sligachan. The clouds had tossed and eddied about it while we fished in the river of the glen. Doré's hell has no blacker recesses than Scour na Gillean's, seen thus canopied with storms. The mountain was much too absorbing for an angler. But in the zenith of our respectful admiration, and while we were yet five miles from port, the heavens loosed themselves upon us again, and

a second furious evening began with a pretty soft afternoon. It was now that we came to loathe Glen Sligachan. The glen is really fine to see, trending south, as it does, from the hotel to the Atlantic between the Coolins and that bold mountain, Marsco, and the far bolder and more astounding spread-eagle peak of Blaven. But it is tormenting to travel, and in times of heavy rain it is almost impassable. However, it soon reduced us to a state of resigned apathy. We took its rocks and morasses and burns in full spate with what vigour was left in us, and so duly reached the hotel, a second time in four-and-twenty hours soaked wellnigh to the marrow. But there is true hospitality at Sligachan, and I, for my part, was glad and grateful when John the waiter gave me the loan of his home-made suit of tweed.

Casual tourists come and go at this little nook. Two dismal days in succession suffice to weed out these dilettante visitors. They have neither patience nor imagination enough to wait for their reward. But their departure profits the survivors. These are then promoted to the dignity of fully appointed bedchambers, and the litter of the smoke-room is diminished by so many pairs of sodden unmentionables, so many yellow-backed novels, guide-books, and deer-stalkers with gaudy flies sticking ostentatiously over their peaks. Society becomes more eclectic. Mountain-climbers can now hob-a-nob comfortably with each other and talk in their formidable jargon without exciting the stares, envy, or ill-concealed derision of the Philistines. And men who are anglers first and civilised human integers only secondarily can now compare flies and tell their innocent little yarns with full assurance of a certain sympathy.

There is one other notable element of compensation in wild weather up here. The midges are temporarily banished. On a fine day in August they are plagues of the first magnitude by the Coolins. There is no cheating them. They sting enthusiasm out of the strongest of souls and turn one's adjectives upside down. I have never felt them worse than at Sligachan. They are assuredly the serpent in this paradise. No matter with what unholy or fetid confection a man anoints himself to keep them aloof, they persist in acting as if they knew that the warm blood beneath would repay them for their persevering quest of it. It is reputed that oil of lavender is disagreeable to them; but we had no oil of lavender, and it is difficult to believe the little wretches can be defeated by so unpretending a foe.

At length an opportunity presented itself. The morning was

incomparably serene. Cottony wisps of white vapour hung about the rocks of the Coolins for a while, until the sun had melted them all into nothingness. Scour na Gillean's jagged cone was exposed to its topmost crag. The glass stood steady. Quite early the midges proclaimed their activity. And the voice of the streams and waterfalls round about the hotel bore a note of lullaby which more than aught else assured us of fine weather.

We took no guide. This, too, in spite of the earnest advice of a gentleman who had already been up Scour na Gillean twice, the first time alone. 'If you will believe me,' he said impressively as he polished his spectacles, 'I felt aghast on the second occasion when I saw what might have happened to me.' We flattered ourselves, however, that he rang his bell of warning with too much parade. Besides, the testimony of two Alpine climbers, who had the same destination in view, was in our favour. On so considerate a day we had but to follow the dictates of common sense and our four eyes. These others were not bound in the same direction as ourselves. There are divers ways of reaching the mountain-top—all sensational and (it may really be said) all dangerous, save one. They had selected the most dangerous of the routes, and went off with coils of new rope about their waists.

On such a day it was exquisite among the heather clumps. The burns, which thirty hours earlier had fought and fumed towards the sea, were now clear, shallow, and languid. The tails of the trout whisked as we disturbed them with our shadows. We disturbed also sundry grouse who were destined in a day or two to hear and see even more disquieting objects: for the twelfth was at hand. Loch Sligachan, in the rear, little by little disclosed itself—a placid pool of silver with the hot hills peering longingly into it.

We rose from the moorland to the first ridge, and thence with more effort to the summit of the second ridge. Then we paused to enjoy the mountain's shape in tranquil laziness and to smoke just one pipe apiece. Propinquity had taught us much about Scour na Gillean that his admirers, content to view him from a distance, cannot know. The huge black mass as seen from Sligachan had now fallen into sections. The northern face, which we had thought solid, declared itself as a ridge first of all, with four isolated pinnacles, precipice-bound at their bases, leading to the fifth pinnacle, which is Scour na Gillean itself. A novice would as soon think of tackling a chimney-stack as these formidable vertical teeth of granite, from one to two or three hundred feet in height.

Scour na Gilleán's crest towered between us and the sun—a gigantic black cube of rock. The shoulder by which we were to approach it was on a sufficiently severe slope; and from the neck to the top of its head it was clear that we were in for a scramble of the most pronounced kind.

In effect, the final slope up the mountain is covered with a débris of boulders, sharp-edged and in chaotic confusion. Beneath them the cheerful gurgling of water was heard. It is an acrobat's task to ascend by these rocks without loss of balance and without using hands. The angle is a steep one however, and it is hard to keep a dignified perpendicularity. We were glad midway to creep under the lee of a huge slab of rock and get at the ice-cold water of a spring. Thence we reached the base of the Scour's head, and rested with our legs dangling over Lotta Corrie (some two thousand feet down) to taste the grandeur of this savage nook of the Coolins and prepare for the last stage of the ascent.

Lotta Corrie is magnificent. It is a dark stony abyss hooped in by a girdle of mountain-tops; absolutely desolate, but with for its never-ending associate the cry of the waters which descend from the sides of the basin into its gloomy bed. There are eagles still among the Coolins, though not so many as some twenty years ago, when the gamekeeper of Glen Brittle was wont to slay them at the rate of a score per annum. If the birds have a due appreciation of the sublime, they must often haunt the tooth of Bhasteir and skim above Lotta Corrie's depths.

It was a hand-over-head business for the remainder of the climb. We clung too close to the Lotta Corrie side of the mountain, and thus had some chimney work to face which we might have avoided. But at the best this is not a lady's mountain. The fair adventuress who has found Mont Blanc no great tax upon her feelings would probably be annoyed if not discomfited by this hill of the Coolins.

Scour na Gilleán's summit is just four or five square yards of surface with a small cairn and some moss on it. It were hard to conceive a more trying spot upon which to be surrounded by black cloud and the storm winds. West, the descent is dangerous to a ridge leading to Bhasteir such as none but cragsmen venture on. North and east the precipices are uncompromising, though with risky foothold in places for men with ropes. South is the drop to Lotta Corrie by successive perpendicular walls of rock with inter-jacent slopes of loose shale that look fatal to touch. And even

south-east, by the way we had come, the view downwards was not without the suggestion of a thrill. Indeed, we studiously deferred thinking about the responsibilities of the return until they forced themselves upon us. Perched on so airy and pronounced a rock point, I had sensations which I immediately recognised as akin to those I have felt in a balloon, with half a mile or more of space between the basket and *terra firma*.

But our panorama of the Coolins was worth much inconvenience to behold. It is a spectacle unique in the land. I cannot do better than compare these dog-tooth ridges to the sides of a Titanic rat-trap, or series of rat-traps. One could fancy that at a word the mountains to the left might overturn and fit into the mountains to the right—with a crash to shake a hemisphere.

It is as well that the Coolins are in Skye and not, say, in Middlesex. If they were within reach of our metropolitan excursionists on a Saturday afternoon, goodness knows what mortality they would occasion. Their delightful temptations would be irresistible, and clerks and shopkeepers would go to their doom of broken necks by the score per Saturday. That is, of course, assuming they would long remain in their present glorious state of nature. An unsound assumption enough, however! It may rather be taken for granted that their gaunt teeth and spires would be chopped and chained, their precipices cut into terraces, and that in the end there would be no more excitement in scaling the Bhasteir tooth, the Old Man of Scour Dearg or Scour Alaisdair, than in plodding up the hundreds of steps to the ball of St. Paul's. Heaven be praised, therefore, that the Coolins are where they are!

From Scour na Gilleann's summit his northern pinnacles are formidable indeed. Recumbent on the moss, with sandwiches and our flasks, we were looking down upon them with great respect when the head and shoulders of a man appeared over the edge of the crest of the tallest of them, for all the world like a nursery monkey on its stick. A little later and we were exchanging 'Halloos' with our Sligachan friends, and assuring them we did not envy them their plight. But they bore our craven messages heroically, and shouted back across the chasm that parted us words in high praise of the hazardous work they had done and had yet to do. Then for half an hour we watched them, as a schoolboy might watch a steeplejack scaling a church spire in the old-fashioned way. They made a strong picture, and I regretted I had

not my Kodak over my shoulder. With this little treasure I could have taken some photographs the realism of which would have seemed too stern for British mountain scenery.

One point about the Coolins must not be omitted. The rocks are so highly magnetic that they render a compass the most fatal of aids in a mist—to the man who does not understand the extent of its inevitable error. We gave the thing a fair test. As nearly as possible it pointed due west for north.

The Ordnance maps of the district are more veracious than the compass used locally. But they, too, are not irreproachable. Unofficial explorers have done something to correct their inaccuracies, both in the record of the heights of the various mountains and in the due relationship of peak to peak, and of the lateral ridges. Like enough, Her Majesty's servants were deceived by their compasses here and there; and it is pretty certain that they preferred to estimate some of the summits by guesswork rather than risk their necks in the execution of their duties. For surveyors the district is a most onerous one. Without a tent it were impossible to make even a superficial report of the country between Glen Brittle and Sligachan. The hotel at the latter place is supposed to be enough for the whole of the south-west of Skye. Twenty years ago a leading English periodical marvelled at the inadequate accommodation for visitors here, and expressed the opinion that 'at any similar point in Switzerland there would be from three to six large hotels.' One may be excused for rejoicing that the wilds of the Coolins are not adulterated so considerably. But at the same time what a boon it would be to have an inn, of however humble a kind, in Glen Brittle!

The descent of Scour na Gilleann is, after the first few minutes, easy as shelling peas. The opening steps are, however, important. They may cost very dear, and in thick weather it is a moot question whether the solitary tourist who has 'lost his head' would do better to sit still and take his chance of death from exposure or attempt to feel his way cautiously down the rock-face he fancies.

Our Alpine friends caught us ere we were on the more level moorland again. They 'enthused' rapturously. 'As good as the Matterhorn!' said one of them, in praise of Scour na Gilleann by 'the pinnacle route.' Of course he spoke from an experience of the mountain that blesses Zermatt. Others, equally qualified to offer an opinion, have said as much. It must always be remem-

bered, however, in favour of the Coolins, that, though many of their ascents are extremely sensational, the rockhold is quite exceptionally firm. The cliffs and crags present a granulated surface rough as a nutmeg-grater. They are not agreeable to unprotected hands—but this demerit is as nothing to their virtue of trustworthiness. In fact, the man with a strong head and trained hands and feet may go anywhere in these mountains without a quarter of the risk that is apparent.

Sligachan is the vestibule to Loch Coruisk as well as to the Coolins. It is rather remote from the lake, but in Skye one must be thankful for small mercies in the matter of facilities of access.

What of novelty can a plain man say about this little close-pent pool, the aspect of which varies so astoundingly with the weather? It has been lauded for its quiet beauty and painted in Stygian colours. No spot in the realm is more apt to defeat expectation.

We had read Scott on the loch and seen Turner's picture of it. We had also gazed with awe on an oil-painting in the Sligachan dining-room, which gave the loch a sort of Satanic beauty, and surrounded it with giant mountains whose sides, sheer as walls, bore crests the most fantastic. The testimony of visitors differed strangely. Some were fatigued by the journey thither and thence, and gave reports that were patently petulant. Ladies who had ridden five-sixths of the way were as eloquent as Scott in praise of the loch; while their brothers or husbands, who had done their work afoot, said 'pooh' to it, and preferred to talk of anything else. It was a case of *quot homines tot sententie* with a vengeance.

And so we walked to see it for ourselves.

It is not an easy expedition. Only the other day a tourist started from Sligachan in like manner on a Tuesday, lost himself, and remained lost until the Thursday afternoon. He probably was very deficient in the bump of locality; and gentlemen thus deficient ought to be careful how they wander out of sight of street lamps and telegraph posts. But the fact remains that the walk from Sligachan to Camasunary, thence to Coruisk by the coast, and from Coruisk back to Sligachan over Drumhain, is a strong one, though in mere distance, I suppose, under twenty miles.

It yields a red-letter day none the less. Black Scour na Gilleán, ruddy Marsco, with the one little bothy on its green

flank, gigantic riven Blaven, Loch na Creabhaich (so fair to the angler), the Bad Step, Coruisk itself, and the superb view from Drumhain of the Coolins on the one hand, and Blaven's great face of precipices on the other—these are the details of the excursion, ineffaceable from the memory.

Many think Blaven the finest mountain in Skye. It is certainly the one with the largest individuality. We sat at its feet, among the perfumed heather and bog-myrtle, and paid it homage for a while. Its fissures, cut from its head to its base, made jetty black lines, which contrasted solemnly with the dark purple of the bulk of the mountain, which on the Glen Sligachan side is bare rock, without one blade of grass to soften it. Here, too, are alluring needles and sawlike edges. We left it with regret for the farmhouse of Camasunary, where we drank milk amid a bevy of collie dogs, who wagged their tails to greet us.

The walk from Camasunary by the coast is not a nice walk. There are warnings in the Sligachan Visitors' Book about it: strangers are entreated by timid tourists not to risk their necks by attempting it. Most likely Mr. Greg, the gentleman who so narrowly missed a death from exhaustion hereabouts in September 1893, was frightened by it, and to escape it wandered from peril to peril until his heart gave out. It is easy to conceive that alone a man may get terrified by an obstacle which would merely excite a laugh of disgust if he had a companion.

Of course there is nothing that can be called even a footpath. Quite early we made our own way—and rough it was, with the naked rock-precipices hundreds of feet above our heads, and the sea beneath us steeply to the left. But the Bad Step proper, which ought to have given us at least a mild shudder, we failed to identify. I fancy we faced worse steps than it; for we got too high up, and became involved in precipices from which we did well eventually to escape by nervous glissades down the vast smoothed rock-surfaces, from narrow ledge to narrow ledge, until Coruisk was attained. The two miles from Camasunary to the loch cost us more than two hours.

Coruisk repaid us certainly for our anxieties. We saw it neither under a cloudless sky nor in the black embrace of storms. But there were clouds enough to serve us. They made a halo over the water, girdling the mountains at their waists. Nothing gives hills so much charm as this. The black spires and teeth of the Coolins showed thus as if suspended betwixt heaven and earth.

Momentarily, however, the prospect changed with the drifting of the scud and the generation of new clouds. Scour Dearg was especially noticeable. The vapour lent vigorous illusion to the mountains: they looked twice their height, and Scour Dearg's crowning pillar seemed as inaccessible as the blue of the heavens beyond clouds, mountains, and all.

We looked and looked, and went on our way up the slope towards Drumhain; and we halted to look back again and again, until at length we realised that we were squandering the daylight moments that remained for us. Methinks Coruisk ought to satisfy all who see it, but those who catch it in tempest are most to be envied. We heard one mutter of thunder from the clouds beneath Scour Dearg. It made us wish for more; but we dared not tarry in hope of it. Even as it was, we had trifled seriously with the hours. On the ridge of Drumhain we ourselves were in the clouds, and it was dark ere, steeped in weariness, we reached the more hospitable end of Glen Sligachan.

Those who have been fortunate enough to see Coruisk by moonlight say it is then most impressive. Perhaps it is; but either Sligachan will have to come a little nearer to it, or an hotel must rise on the rocky peninsula between Coruisk and Scavaig, ere the majority of visitors will also be able to share in the majestic spectacle. The idea of waiting for the moon and then jogging homewards over the wild hillsides and up formidable Glen Sligachan at the witching hour of a pitchy night, is not a comfortable one.

Sligachan and the Coolins soon endear themselves to the tourist. When the time came we were loth to leave them. There were pleasant people in the inn, and Donald, the factotum, stands head and shoulders above all other hotel servants for his cheerful resignation to the whims and wishes of the score or two of people whose boots he cleaned. It is not a luxurious resort, but it is something better. Skye is not a bracing land, and men who visit it hoping to enlarge the bounds of their appetites will be disappointed. Of sixteen sandwiches that were taken up Scour na Gilleann, as a not unreasonable luncheon for four men, eight were left on the rocks for the eagles. But this was accounted a small grievance compared with the placid satisfaction that grows with one's sojourn here. The midges may be very bad and one's sinews annoyingly relaxed. No matter. In the afterwards the benefit will be reaped. A man can take home with him into

conventional England few more stirring memories of mountains and rushing streams amid empurpled moorland than those Sligachan and the Coolins will provide.

As we drove into Portree we met many of our rustic friends—the black-garbed women, with lobster-red faces, and their eccentric mankind. The Sacrament Sunday was over.

‘It’ll be the whuskey,’ said our driver, without flinching, when we inquired about their picturesque unsteadiness of gait.

DADDY LONGLEGS AND HIS JOANNA

AN old, gaunt, withered woman called one afternoon to see Mrs. Pointon. I had met her a few days previously, creeping feebly along in the sunshine, and now I had the curiosity to inquire who she might be.

'Oh, that be Daddy Longlegs's Joanna, zur,' said my landlady with something of a sigh.

'I am not much wiser now, Mrs. Pointon,' I said, smiling; 'I don't know who Daddy Longlegs is. I suppose Joanna is his wife?'

'Beg pardon, zur, I'd forgot for the moment that you be a stranger. Everybody 'bout here knows Daddy's Joanna. Joanna be the maid Daddy Longlegs be coorten. His praper name be Longland, but he be allus called Longlegs, and then volks put Daddy to it—it seemed natral like.'

'But surely that is an old woman,' I said, 'not a girl. She is over seventy, I should say.'

'No, zur, 'bout sixty-five. Do'ee zee, zur, Daddy begun coorten she long avore I was married, and Pointon and me was man and wife togeder vor eighteen yer and he's bin in his coffin nine yer come Moerton Vair, when he was a young chap and Joan a bouncen maid—vine man and woman when I vurst knew en—and zo volks 'bout here thinks of en as boy and maid still, zur.'

'And Daddy Longlegs is dead, I suppose?'

'Oh, no, zur, he baint, pore chap, though I do zay he'd be better thereaway than where he be now, vor he have bin in Suckton workus thease zeven yer. He allus call to zee I, and I generally gives him zomethen when he comes oncet a month in Zamway's donkey-cart, and volks generally be very kind to both of en, vor, do'ee zee, zur, we all be pore in Barleigh, and we veels vor they two who's loved one other zo long. Pore volks be zo vond of one other when they be in love as rich volks, and they two be allus mortal loven. Daddy be gotten child-like now, and he allus do zay, when he comes down oncet a month, "I be thinken of beën married zoon, ma'am," he do zay, "to Joanna. She be willen and I be willen, and we's gwain to wed in the zpring." But we in Barleigh thinks, zur, that it be very likely they will be married in

the zpring, but it'll be in the churchyard.' And Mrs. Pointon did not disdain to wipe a tear away.

Love tales generally do not interest me as much as they do some people, but I was both interested and touched by the tale of this love that was still serene after the misfortunes and trials of forty years, and Mrs. Pointon was only too glad to tell me all she knew of Daddy and his Joanna.

Joseph Longland was born at Poddle, a hamlet of half-a-dozen houses, two miles from Barleigh. He was the seventh and youngest child of Ezekiel Longland and his wife Susan. Ezekiel and his wife had managed to rear their seven children in a mud cottage consisting of a bedroom, a living-room, and a tiny pantry. Ezekiel's standing wage was seven shillings a week, sometimes less in winter, a little more in harvest-time. Farmer Penny, long since dead, employed this hand for twenty-two years, and lived his life unvexed by labourers' unions and other detestable engines for spoiling the farm hand. Yet the farmer lived to witness the average wage rise from six to seven shillings, and ever after he was filled with gloom as he thought of his country's future.

In harvest-time Ezekiel worked from four in the morning till half-past eight at night, and when he used to go on the Saturday night for the extra halfcrown he had earned, his master was aggrieved. 'Thee'st earned a girt lump, Zeke, theäse wik, a girt lump. I can't afford to pay it all to 'ee theäse wik—it'll have to stand o'er. Here's zixpence oft. Zeven-and-zixpence in one wik! Ye hands be gotten richer than your maisters.'

Yet Ezekiel managed to bring up his four sons and three daughters without costing his country a penny. If National Biography were written in perspective, Ezekiel Longland's name would have more than an infinitesimal space in it.

Daddy was brought up healthy and strong-limbed on the ninth part of seven shillings a week till he was ten, when employment was found for him as a scarecrow and stonepicker at sixpence a week. By slow stages he had reached five-and-sixpence a week by the time he was twenty. Then ambition fired him, and he resolved to go out into the world—which, to Barleigh folks, generally meant Suckton. To Suckton he went and earned nine shillings a week as hod-carrier. It was hard labour, for he had to rise at three for his five-mile walk to the town, and there was the same weary journey back in the evening.

He only remained there three weeks. But it was not the toil

that frightened him. Barleigh had a fascination too strong to be resisted; he felt miserable and out of place amid the ceaseless bustle of the five thousand inhabitants of Suckton, and he could ill brook the witticisms of his fellow-workers, to whom no good thing could come from Barleigh. He went back to Barleigh and six shillings a week, determined never to face the life of cities again.

Daddy as a young fellow was shy, and never shared in the delights of waiting round the church-door on Sundays. But when he was twenty-six the great and abiding mystery and joy were revealed to him and his lifelong love for Joanna Snellings began.

Joanna was a year younger than Daddy, a large-boned young woman with red cheeks and redder arms and hands, and the feet of a sturdy man. Joanna was an only child and the bread-winner for her helpless parents. She had steadfastly resolved that they should never be 'disgraced' by the pauper garb, and by haphazard work in farm-kitchens and the fields she fought a grim and desperate battle against starvation.

It was while potato-picking for Daddy's employer that their life-love began. Daddy was digging up the potatoes and Joanna was picking them, and for three days they were in close fellowship. In those days Daddy had very old-fashioned ideas on woman's sphere, and he looked with a very jealous eye on woman's competition in the fields. He was not nice to Joanna the first day they worked together; if she rested a moment he sneered, and he professed to find her workmanship crude and inartistic. But he could not raise her anger; she merely laughed and went steadily on with her work.

The second day was very hot, and Daddy was obliged to rest at short intervals and grumble at the weather. The sight of Joanna steadily working angered him. 'Ye wimun,' he said, 'mäke beleäve 'ee work hard putten taties in a sack; if 'ee had the diggen of en 'ee'd know what work be.'

Joanna looked up and measured him for an instant as he leaned on his spade, then, pushing him aside so roughly that he fell, she seized the spade and dug away some time without pause or word. Daddy sat where he had fallen, looking on in helpless amazement and longing vainly for signs of exhaustion, until Joanna asked him if he thought picking up the potatoes would be too hard work for him.

Daddy spake no word the whole afternoon until they were

going home. 'Joan,' he said, 'I be vexed I zed what I did to 'ee, zno. I were a vooil to zay what I did. Thee beest a vurst-rate maid vor work, zno.'

Joanna unbent at this apology, and the next day they were quite confidential. It was while they were having dinner together under the shelter of the hedge that Daddy did the most courageous action of his life by saying to Joanna, 'Coud'n us two rub along togeder, zno?'

Joanna considered the matter a little, but she gave Daddy his answer in the course of the afternoon. 'I like 'ee well enough,' she said, 'to marry 'ee, but there be pore wold father and mother I coud'n leave. I promised en.'

Daddy cordially approved. 'But look'ee here now, Joan,' he said. 'Let we agree to be wed if I can get enough to keep all your o' we and lay by a bit vor little uns comen.'

'I agree to that,' said Joanna; 'but we's have to wait a bit I s'pose.'

'But it never came to be,' said Mrs. Pointon. 'They two were very cheerful waiten vor better times, but times went bad 'zthead o' better vor 'em and vor most o' pore volk here, though I ain't anythen to complain of, thanks be to the Almighty vor it, zur.'

'Thank you, Mrs. Pointon,' I said; 'I am very much interested in your story. When is Daddy's next visit to Barleigh due?'

'Let I zee, zur; this be the vourteenth. He will be out on Wednesday wik, zur.'

'I should like to see him when he comes,' I said. 'Will you ask him in to see me?'

'That will I, zur. Daddy'll be as proud as a setten hen to have a talk wi' a gentleman. And I'll tell 'ee what, zur, that is, if you don't mind; I'll have zome roasted taties ready vor him and you shall give en to him, zur, and that'll loosen his tongue. He allus was main vond of roasted taties.'

'Thank you, Mrs. Pointon. He smokes, I suppose?'

'That he do, zur; he do like a pipe o' baccy. Moöst like he'll pull out his wold clay and play wi' en as a hint to 'ee, zur, as he would like a pipe.'

I looked forward with impatience to my meeting with Daddy. In the meantime I met Joanna and had a few words with her.

Wednesday came, and with it wind and gusts of rain. But Mrs. Pointon assured me that the weather would not stop Daddy,

and about three o'clock I saw an old man, bent nearly double, go shuffling past the corner of the house to the back-door, and knew him by his workhouse garb of corduroy.

'Well, Daddy,' I heard my landlady say, 'you be come to zee we oncet more. How be?'

'I be tol'able, thank'ee, ma'am, tol'able. Bit stiffish 'bout the joints, but tol'able. Ees, I be come once more, ma'am. I be comen to live here zoon agin.'

'Ay, Daddy, I's afeared. But come in now and wipe they boots on thik mat. Theer's a gentleman in the parlour wants to zee 'ee—a rale gentleman vrom London. Wipe they boots and come along o' I.'

Mrs. Pointon came up the passage and knocked, and I could hear her whispering ere she opened the door, 'Now mind 'ee manners, Daddy.'

'Here be Daddy Longlegs come vor to zee 'ee, zur,' was Mrs. Pointon's introduction.

'I am glad to see you, Daddy,' I said. 'Come in and sit down in this armchair. I want to have a long talk with you.'

Daddy came forward and did not 'forget his manners.' I cursed the workhouse regimen with all my heart as this quivering old man, whose life had been a tragedy and a heroism, came forward, his back bent with rheumatism till his chin was on a level with his middle, holding his staff and battered grey top-hat—which he kept for visiting purposes—in one hand, and with his right hand twitching the knot of storm-bleached hair that overhung his forehead as a sign of respect and servitude to me, even as, I suppose, he entered the presence of his lordly rulers, the master and matron of the workhouse and the guardians of the poor. It was in that attitude that the guardians and myself ought to have stood before Daddy. We send our worn-out horses to the knacker's yard, and we send our worn-out veterans of plough and spade, as the best we can do for them, to something less merciful than a knacker's yard—to the badge and slavery of the pauper. In Heaven's name, if we cannot provide rest-homes and pensions, let us provide a pole-axe.

I made a signal to Mrs. Pointon to bring in the taties, and then turned to Daddy. 'You must make yourself at home, Daddy. I want you and me to spend a pleasant afternoon together. Give me your hat and stick, and warm your hands. I have something good coming for you; can you guess what it is?'

'Taties?' he asked, his eyes twinkling brightly among the furrows.

'Here it comes,' I said, as Mrs. Pointon entered with a plateful of the great delicacy.

'Taties? roasted?' said Daddy again, a low and scarcely audible cackle shaking him.

'They baint none too hot vor 'ee, Daddy,' said Mrs. Pointon, 'zo 'ee can begin. Thank the gen——'

I stopped Mrs. Pointon imperatively. 'Begin, Daddy.'

From long habit Daddy closed his eyes, and his lips moved for a space ere he began. But Providence was in the plate there before him, and his glistening eyes and eager tremulous hands were his best grace. Daddy had no need of knife and fork. He burst the potatoes by pressing them lovingly between his fingers, and he ate slowly, first because it was polite, and secondly because it was a banquet fit to linger over.

'You like ale, Daddy?' I asked.

Daddy's eyes sparkled. 'Ees, zur, I do like a drap o' ale now and agin. It do put the spirut into a man zoo. We's ale at Chesmas, and pudden.'

'Well, I have some for you, to-day, Daddy, better than you get at Christmas.' And I opened a bottle.

Daddy looked at me with a wistfulness that was more than pathetic. He took the glass in his trembling fingers and held it up to the light.

'Health, zur.'

'And yours, Daddy,' I answered. 'I am going to have a glass with you.'

I watched Daddy in silence while he ate and drank. A smile of contentment would now and again light up his face, and now and again, I imagined, a shade of disappointment crossed it as he thought of Joanna banquetless. I could see in him the battered and bent ruins of a fine man. He must have been close on six feet in his prime, and in his shrunken arms and legs I saw the deserted homes of powerful muscles. His face was red—the red of winter rains and east winds and scorching sun—and was ploughed deep at all angles. His lips had fallen in over the toothless gums, and his hair lay thin and white and long over his forehead and outstanding ears. From their deep caverns his eyes shone with the brilliancy common to old age. His hands were fleshless and the knuckles were drawn up in great knots; his

spine was bent to the shape of a U. Like many an English peasant he had asked bread of Mother Nature in storm and sun. The bread had gone to others, and for him was the peasant's curse—rheumatism.

Daddy ate slowly, and drank his ale in sips according to the fashion of the Christmas banquets of the workhouse. When he had eaten all his potatoes but four, he stopped, eyed them lovingly, and began fumbling for his pocket.

'Have you had enough, Daddy?' I asked.

'I be gwaïn to zee Joan, zur, she do like roasted taties.'

'Eat those yourself, Daddy, if you can; I will see that Joanna has some.'

'Will 'ee now, zur? Then I eats en,' and Daddy set to work again, finishing them with a sigh of contentment.

'Now, Daddy,' I said, 'draw up your chair nearer to the fire. Here is a pipe and some tobacco for you, and a glass of ale when you are thirsty.'

Daddy pulled his forelock again with a 'Thank 'ee, zur, very kindly,' as he took the proffered pipe. At intervals his sides would shake with a silent fit of laughter and he would look at me with twinkling eyes.

We smoked together silently for some time, Daddy intent on his pipe, and I watching him smoke as if every whiff were precious, just as I could imagine a convict smoking who was accorded the luxury of one pipe a year. Suddenly Daddy took his pipe in his hand and said, 'You be a genwine genm'n, you be, zur.'

'Why, Daddy?'

'I mind,' went on Daddy, 'vorty yer agoen when 'lection time be, I zeed a rale genm'n; he gave I ale and baccy and vive shillens. Er were a Parlyment man; leastwa'ys he wanted we chaps to put en theer. They *was* times, zur, was they.'

'But you have seen gentlemen since then, Daddy?'

'Noa, zur, noa rale genm'n. I zeen squire and passon and magstrates, but they baint kind genm'n. Noa, noa, zur, they baint.'

'But surely the parson was a real gentleman?'

'Noa,' said Daddy emphatically, 'he wornt. I mind he were a magstrate, and he put away dree of we chaps vor tekken a rabbut vrom a snare. "Vortnit in quod," zays passon, and we chaps knowed nothen bout thik snare. We zeen thik rabbut and gwoes vor to take en, haven nothen vor to live upon.' Daddy

quivered, and his hands shook violently. 'Passon kind? Wustest ov all ov en, he be.'

'Never mind that now, Daddy,' I said; 'empty your glass and fill your pipe again. I want you to tell me about Joanna.'

'Joan, zur, Joan my sweetheart, zur! Do 'ee know my Joan, zur? Vine woman she be. Smartest maid herebouts I do zay. We's gwain to wed come zpring when rheumatiz be gwone. We's waited one vor other vor vorty yer, and I be gwain to make Joan a wife in de zpring. I be comen out o' yonder and git zome work, and then we'll wed.'

'You have courted Joanna a long time, Daddy. Why have you put it off so long? Do you like Joanna?'

Daddy took his pipe from his mouth and emphasised his sentences with it.

'Joan and me's been main vond and loven, allus, allus, zur, since we vurst begun coorten. Joan loves I and I loves Joan. A vine maid, my Joan, zur; baint she, zur? Have 'ee zeen my Joan, zur?'

'I saw her yesterday.'

'I be gotten on in yers a bit, but Lord love 'ee, zur, I be zpry, that I be, when rheumatism holds offen, and Joan be gotten on a bit, too. But Lord love 'ee, zur, we feels as young and tender and loven as bits o' bwoys and maids. Coorten Joan be as nice as ever 'twere. We be tol'able grownupish, but we can voot it wi' the bestest of en, me and Joan.

'I minds, zur, as it be theäse wik, Joan and me was worken tatie-getten. I never thinks so much as nothen bout Joan till thik day, and I mind I were allus mortal shy wi' the maids. But when we were gwain hwome at dusk, Lord! if I didd'n get talken, and next marn'n I up and asks she if she'd wed I, and Joan zes, "Ees, if her wold volks were provided vor."'

Daddy's laughter at that day of days shook him from top to toe.

'Joan was allus a vine maid and a zpry maid, wi' cheeks as red as any Lon'on lady's, and strong—bless 'ee, zur, she be mighty powerful in the arms, Joan be. Willum Thackit, he had his eye on Joan; sheep-eyes, zur. But Lord love 'ee, zur, it warn't a mossel o' use *him* foolen round. Joan never looked at en, she were allus zo vond o' me.

'Joan zes to me, we's to wait till her folks were gone. "Right," zes I. "No workus vor they," zes Joan. "Right," zes

I agin, quite cheerful, "but, howsomever, s'pose I can keep all your o' we, how then, Joan?" zes I. "Then I marry 'ee," zes Joan.

'Joan's father hadd'n use o' his limbs and her mother were bent like—like zome volks be, zur, and coud'n do nothen, zo Joan kep' en. I calkelated it'd be a grand harvest-zummer and plenty o' work, zur. But it turned out wettish, ter'ble wettish, and wages went down. And then my father—waggon went over he, and I had to keep my mother. "Joan," zes I, "we's to wait a bit longer." And Joan were a brave maid, and she kissed I, and zes, "We be gwain to wait. If a dook comes to I and zes, 'Joanna, marry me,' I zhall zay I be wäiten vor a chap o' my own." I tel 'ee, zur, Joan be a maid to worshup. Vine maïd she be, zur.

'And zo we waited, zur, and one thing and then the other come 'twixt we. But Lord love 'ee, zur, we didd'n mind zo much as *that*.' (Daddy tried to snap his fingers.) 'I used to gwo coorten reglar; zometimes we's gwo walken out and coorten, and zometimes we's coort at Joan's house. Lord! but it be vine work, be coorten. Did 'ee ever gwo coorten, zur? I comes oncet a month to coort now, and it be zo grand and heavenly as 'twere avore. My Joan allus be a teäzer, zur, and when I's wanted to kiss zhe, zhe zes, "Noa, it ain't proper." But Lord! I know what maïds be, zur, zo I takes hwold o' zhe and takes en. When I do zee her, zur, we considers 'bout de house we's have, wi' a rale carpet on the vloor, and a pig and two or dree vowils vor Joan to make a shillen or two out of en.'

Daddy stopped to light his pipe; every crease in his face deepened with joy at the thought of life with the woman he loved.

'Volks uset to laugh at we betimes and zay 'twere nearly time I took Joan to church. But it be like this, zur. Volks all think different wäys, zur; you thinks your wäy, zur, and I thinks mine, I thinks it baint 'zactly right vor bits o' bwoys and maïds to marry. Little chits o' maïds get married theäse times, zur. Do 'ee zee, zur, Joan and me be zensible, and we know one the other's wäys by this time. We's be wed in de zpring if rheumatiz gwoes, zure.'

The old man smacked his lips over his pipe and looked at me half cunningly, as he made this reiterated statement. I nodded in encouragement, and he went on.

'Volks laughed at we, but Lord! they meant no harm. Every-body liked my Joan. Zo they allus zaid, friendly-like, puffectly

friendly, "When'st wedding to be, Daddy?" "Zoon," zays I, "zoon. Zpring it'll be, I expects."

'Avore my mother died rheumatism got in my bwones at sheep-shearen, and Varmer Vlitch he turned I off. Varmer Wenton took I on at zix zhillens a week, but do 'ee zee, zur, I were bad thik winter, and avore I knowed they took I over yonder'—pointing with his pipe over his shoulder. I would my country's law-makers had been with me to listen to the old man as he leant forward to tell of his defeat in the battle. They might have thought as I did, that 'over yonder' was hardly the fitting place for the wounded veteran.

'I mind I be a bit down then, zur, and Joan be down, just about. But I zes cheerful-like, "Steady, Joan, maïd, we be strong and zpzy yet; I be comen in zpring, Joan, and then we's wed." But they places—over yonder, be damp, mortal damp, and rheumatiz bain't quite gone yet, zur. Howsomever, it'll be gone come zpring, I 'low. If it bain't taken a libbity, zur, p'raps 'ee'd step in and zee me and Joan next zpring. Our place'll be clean, zur, vor Joan be a vurst-rate maïd to clean up, zur.'

'If I am here I shall certainly come to see you, Daddy, and have a cup of tea with you. Now listen to me. It's getting late, and so we will have tea, and after that I shall drive you back in Peggin's trap.'

'Thank'ee, zur, you be a rale genm'n. Why, I haven't bin pleasuring in a trap since 'lection time. Howsomever 'ee'll put me down, zur, when we gets to Suckton Hill. I's be able to vind de way myself aloän, zur.'

Ah! Daddy, I knew why. You were anxious that I should not see your degradation as you stepped into the grim portals of Over Yonder. I left Daddy with his pipe, and while Mrs. Pointon prepared the tea I went to bring the gaunt withered maid to have tea with her sweetheart.

'Hope 'ee'll excuse me, zur, comen, but I don't have a frock fit to come in,' said Joan. But I would listen to no excuses and took her prisoner.

That tea was as a waft of keener and purer air, and strengthened my faith in human nature; so much I owe to the two old paupers. Joan, the bent, withered, timid woman before me, was still the rosy-cheeked damsel in Daddy's eyes, and if she had been the first among English beauties he could not have been prouder of showing her to me. Joan was too timid to say much, but Daddy was a

model of chivalry and devotion. When he picked up a slice of toast which he fancied was nicer or softer than the rest, he would place it on her plate, offering me as an apology, 'Joan's teeth be ter'ble achy, zur.' 'Tea 'greeable, Joan?' he would ask at every second sip, adding to me, 'Joan do like a cup o' good tea, zur;' and then in a whisper, 'Vine maid, baint zhe, zur?'

I left them together for a few minutes while I got the trap ready, and I knew by Joan's confusion when I returned that Daddy had kissed her. 'Come zpring, my maïd,' he said as he bade her good-night.

Great was the old man's pride as we drove down the street, and he returned the salutations of his friends with a condescending affability it was delightful to witness.

'Now, Daddy,' I said as soon as we had left the village, 'you must try to rid yourself of the rheumatism, for to-morrow I shall look out for a house for you and Joan to live in when you are married.'

Daddy brightened for a moment, then his countenance fell. 'You be kind, rale kind, zur. But we's no money till I find work in de zpring.'

'Make haste and get better then, Daddy, and I will see that you have some work.'

'Thank'ee kindly, zur, rheumatiz be gwaïn. I be vurst-rate the day, zur.'

I put Daddy down directly we came in sight of the town, and I pleased the old man still more by driving off at once instead of watching him.

There are not many houses in Barleigh to choose from, but fortunately a little two-roomed cottage with a strip of garden stood empty close to the church. Mrs. Pointon guided and advised me in stocking the farmyard, that is to say, the pig and the vew vowils, and most of the furniture we bought at a sale in Suckton.

On the following Sunday the Vicar asked for the first time if any one knew just cause or impediment why Joseph Longland and Joanna Snellings should not attain their long-deferred heart's desire.

They were married on the Monday following 'the last time of asking.'

All Barleigh took part in the rejoicings and drank the health of bride and bridegroom with great fervour.

I have not the heart to raise a laugh over the scene. Neither Joanna nor Daddy had seen their home till they came from church to their wedding-breakfast. Daddy's speech in returning thanks was brief, but it was eloquent. 'Kind neighbours, Joan and me's bin made man and wife the day. I zaid we should be in the zpring. God bless we all!'

It was only by degrees that the splendour of the simple cottage unfolded itself to them. Daddy gave a chuckle of delight over every fresh article, Joanna wept. But the climax came when Daddy, exploring in the garden, found the pig and the 'two or dree vowils.' All Barleigh were invited to see them.

I wanted to pay the nearest neighbour to look after the old couple, but she indignantly spurned my offer. 'Zurely, zur, you haint thinken we want to be paid to help they two. All o' we'll be only too thankful to do a bit vor en. Never veer, zur, they'll be zeen to.'

When I left Barleigh the Vicar consented to be the administrator of the sum I left for them and to keep me informed of their ongoings. Cheaper pleasure man never had.

The Vicar writes to me once a fortnight and makes me merry with Daddy's sayings and doings. He is busy all day in his garden, but he is steadily growing weaker, and the doctor fears he will not be able to survive the winter.

CHARACTER NOTE.

MY LORD.

'Chacun aime comme il est.'

MY LORD is young with George IV. He loses a fortune at play, and another amassed by a pious aunt in the country, at all sorts of devilries. My Lord has thrashed the watch and staked an estate on the cards in an evening. He records many years after how he enters the ring with the Regent, and how the First Gentleman in Europe, with an exquisite ease and urbanity, confesses himself beaten.

My Lord is on the turf, where he wins and flings away a fortune with a mad generosity; where he loses, and does not trench. My Lord is dressed with the carelessness that is a part of his nature, and with a richness that becomes the Court of the Regent.

My Lord can sing a song with the best over his wine, and take his two bottles—like a gentleman. His speech is garnished, even in very old age, with those flowers of expression which were in universal vogue in his youth. He recalls, forty years later, a hundred stories of that mad career of pleasure. He remembers with a curious accuracy a thousand details respecting his companions and the manners and habits of that wild day. He knows, and retails with perfect wit and point, a thousand stories of the Court which have never crept into print. His reminiscences are as interesting as a book of scandalous memoirs.

My Lord indeed has pretty well beggared himself before he is thirty. He marries money. And money in the person of a shrewish wife is false to his honour and her own. His daughter, who belongs to her mother's faction, marries abroad, and is lost to him for ever. His son, from whom he has hoped everything, is not only wild—which indeed My Lord should be one to forgive easily—but brings dishonour on a great name and dies miserably.

My Lord is not yet sixty years old when he retires to Hamblin, the estate in the country which his extravagances have left heavily mortgaged, and his neglect has left out of repair. A number of evil stories, gathering astonishingly in volume and flavour at every stage of the journey, have followed him from town. Virtue points

out with her positive finger that this old age of poverty, solitude, and disappointment is but the just and natural harvest of that astonishing crop of wild oats sown in that wild youth. When My Lord, therefore, appears in the village with his lean figure stooping a little, and his narrow eyes extraordinarily bright and keen, he excites that exceeding interest and curiosity which it is believed are never roused by anything less entertaining than a reputation for iniquity. Some persons are quite shocked to see him in church on Sunday. There is a terrible story current of him for a little while to the effect that he does not know the position of the Psalms in the Liturgy. But he soon mends this error, and lives a life of so much retirement, simplicity, and apparently virtue, as to become wholly uninteresting to everybody.

After a time My Lord takes unto himself a domestic Chaplain, who lives with him the greater part of the year. The Chaplain is round-faced, benevolent and kindly, with a full chin above his white tie, bespeaking a hundred pleasant human virtues. The Chaplain enjoys port wine in the most honest moderation—is in no sense an ascetic—has a heart full of charity and good-will for all men—a kindly sense of humour, and a very true and self-respecting affection for My Lord, his patron.

‘I don’t come to church to hear your sermons, Ruther, you know,’ says My Lord, ‘which are damned long and prosy—you know they are. I come to look at your wife listening to them.’

The Chaplain’s wife, whom he calls Miriam, is very sweet and simple and delicate. Miriam has brown curls shading a clear forehead, a brown silk frock revealing sloping Early Victorian shoulders, and the most tender, candid eyes in all the world. Miriam is of gentler birth than her husband, whom she loves and reveres as at once the cleverest, dearest, and best of created beings.

My Lord has not often met the Miriam type of woman. Perhaps never before. At first he does not understand her. He looks at her across the dinner table with his unsteady hand playing with his glass and a sort of perplexity in his shrewd old eyes. ‘So damned innocent,’ he says to himself. ‘So damned innocent.’ Perhaps damned innocence has not been the leading characteristic of the lady acquaintances of his youth. He wonders at it a little at least in Miriam as if it were some new thing.

His wonder, indeed, gives place very soon to another feeling. He has at last for this woman the purest and tenderest affection he has ever known.

'I have the devil of a reputation, Ruthers,' says My Lord grimly. 'Don't you do me the honour to be jealous of me?'

'No, My Lord,' says the Chaplain, looking at his patron.

And indeed My Lord has for Miriam such a feeling as, in a happier circumstance, he might have felt for a child of his own.

There are a thousand ways in which Miriam appeals to My Lord's ancient sense of humour. He likes to hear her say 'Hush!' in her shocked gentle voice, when from immemorial habit he ornaments his speech with an oath. He has not the less a most tender respect for her purity. When she asks questions, in her damned innocence, about his youth, he bowdlerizes his old stories to an extent that the Chaplain does not even recognise them.

'I lie horribly,' says My Lord when Miriam has left the two to their wine. 'Past absolution, eh, Ruthers?'

But the Chaplain, who may very possibly be right, thinks not.

Miriam's most staunch and simple belief in My Lord's goodness amuses him vastly at first. Another feeling mingles with his amusement after a while as he looks into her clear eyes.

'We were a cursed bad lot in those days,' he says. 'If you knew how bad, you wouldn't have anything to say to me.'

But Miriam says 'Yes, I should,' and nods her head so that the brown Victorian curls shake a little, and puts her gentle hand for a moment into My Lord's wizened old fingers.

For the first time in his life, the wildness of his youth rests a little uneasily upon that accommodating organ which is called My Lord's conscience.

'Gad!' says My Lord, with that light cynicism of manner which may or may not hide a deeper feeling. 'I feel almost like a convert. No thanks to your prosy old preachings, Ruthers. Don't flatter yourself.'

And indeed the Chaplain, who is the most humble and simple of men, does not do so at all.

In the summer mornings, it is Miriam's habit to play with her children on the great sloping lawns before the house. My Lord watches her more often than he knows perhaps from the open windows of his library.

She comes in to see him sometimes, and looks up with a soft wistfulness in her pretty eyes at the great books in their shelves.

'I wish I could read some of these,' she says, taking down a French work and holding it up to him.

'God forbid!' says My Lord piously.

But indeed Miriam's French is neither of a quantity nor quality to do her any sort of harm.

She goes back to the children presently. My Lord sits long with the book, which he does not read, before him. He has aged rapidly lately. He feels sometimes very old indeed. The hand, with the ruffles of a long-past fashion hanging over it, is very lean and unsteady. My Lord puts down at first to approaching senility a certain odd sensation of something that might almost be shame for that wild past, that comes to him, with Miriam. He ascribes to a weakened intelligence a sort of emotion he knows when Miriam plays Handel and Haydn in the half lights, at the harpsichord. Sometimes on Sunday evenings after dinner, and before the darkness has come, she draws out the harp from its corner, and sings to it in the sweetest voice in the world. She sings to it the old religious music which is of no fashion but for all time. Her white frock and the sweet piety of her bent face make one of her hearers at least think, as it is probable he has not often thought before, of the angels.

He sits, as he has told the Chaplain, during the prosy discourses on Sunday and looks at her tender rapt face and her quiet folded hands. She brings the children to him sometimes. One night, he catches sight of her in the room set apart as a nursery, bending over one of them in its cot, with a face all beautiful, human and maternal, and her lips moving in a prayer.

His seared old heart is touched at this time by a thousand emotions which it has never known, or to which it has long been dead. He is less cynical—to Miriam. The stories of his wild youth have lost some of their attraction for him, and he relates them, even to the Chaplain, very seldom.

Is it a conversion, as he has suggested with a sneer? God knows. Is a conversion possible at threescore years and ten, with a character formed by immemorial habit and marked with the impression of a life? God knows also.

One day My Lord is taken ill. It is a long illness, to which there can be no end but one. He lies in the great state bedroom, in the great state bed which has sheltered three sovereigns. If he be changed in heart, as is surmised, he is scarcely changed in manner at all. The simplicity of Miriam, his gentle nurse, at once amuses and touches him a thousand times a day. He tells her, in a voice somewhat feebler than usual, the royal anecdotes of

that royal bedchamber. He likes to watch her absorbed reverent face as she listens, for Miriam is loyalist to the core, as a good woman should be, and has the Divine Right of Kings written indelibly on her simple heart.

'But they were human too—some of them,' finishes My Lord with a sort of chuckle, and turning on his pillow to look at his listener.

She sits by his side the greater part of the day. She brings her prayer-books and a volume of sermons given to her on her marriage. My Lord listens with an exemplary patience to the longwinded wordiness of the Georgian divine. He thinks, by a certain stoplessness in the reader's method, that she does not always grasp the somewhat obscure meaning. He is sure by her sweet voice and tender face that she is wholly edified nevertheless. Sometimes during the readings she puts one of the babies on the foot of the patient's bed, that he may have the inestimable privilege of looking at it when he feels inclined.

'See us, Ruther,' says My Lord when the Chaplain finds them thus one day. 'After my way of living, doesn't this strike you as a damned odd way of dying?'

On Sunday Miriam reads the Order for Morning Prayer with My Lord stumbling through the responses. The situation strikes him as ludicrous at first; but Miriam is very sweet and grave and good. He hears the rhythm of her voice in the tender majesty of the old prayers, as one hears sweet singing in a dream. Miriam is infinitely conscientious and reads them every one. And when the Chaplain points out to her that, in consideration of the patient's weakness, she might omit to pray for the Parliament, My Lord from his bed says, 'No, no. Dammy, they need it,' and begs that Miriam may be left to her own devices.

My Lord grows gradually weaker as the summer advances. Before the flowers have faded and the leaves fallen he is too weak to talk at all. He sleeps a great deal. When he is awake his eyes follow Miriam, and when she is more divinely simple than usual his lips wear a smile. It is apparent that when she leaves him he is uneasy. Her simplicity is worth at such a time all the wit and sprightliness in the world.

Before the end comes, in a sultry night, My Lord talks ramblingly, with a new strength, of his wild youth, of the companions long dead, who belonged with himself to a society most brilliant, corrupt, and artificial. He starts once from his pillow

with an oath. By his bedside Miriam is kneeling bewildered, a white figure in the half-darkness.

He repeats the snatch of a wild song in his dying voice. He laughs aloud, as he may have laughed fifty years before. He cries, with an exceeding bitter cry, the name of the son who disgraced it.

But before he dies, for one quiet moment, his reason comes back to him. And the last impression on the mind of My Lord, who has been a sinner, is of Miriam with clear uplifted face and folded hands.

NORMAN BLOOD OR OTHERWISE.

IN order at once to relieve your mind from painful tension, I will admit from the very outset that I am only going to write about double-barrelled place-names. I have not the slightest intention of inflicting upon you any political or social reflections on the relative value of simple faith and Norman blood in the matrimonial or any other market; nor am I desirous of instituting an invidious distinction between kind hearts and coronets, after the fashion of a late distinguished bard who was born to the first and acquired the second. My sole intent is all for your delight, not unmixed with a lingering though sternly repressed desire for your edification; and I propose, if I may, to combine these innocent ends by discoursing to you of sundry mild Norman survivals in the names of certain villages and towns of England.

Double-barrelled surnames, of course, have long ceased to be a novelty. Anybody who is anybody has insisted for the last thirty years on giving his friends the unnecessary trouble of directing their letters with a pair of surnames, where one would seem to answer every reasonable purpose. It was the peers and landed proprietors who began this little game of spelling your patronymic with a decorative hyphen. They chose to marry heiresses or inherit property from distant branches of their families, and to advertise the fact by assuming both names, their own and their wives', or their own and their benefactors', as if by dint of acquiring a couple of estates they had duplicated their personality, and went about thenceforth as living Januses, like the Siamese Twins or the Two-headed Nightingale. They were all of them Pelham-Clintons and Curzon-Howes and Ashley-Coopers; they rejoiced in their duality as Agar-Ellises and Bootle-Wilbrahams; they blossomed forth with delight into tandem pairs of Leveson-Gowers and Knatchbull-Hugessens. Some of them, indeed, even went a step further, and appeared, like Mrs. Malaprop's Cerberus, as 'three gentlemen rolled into one,' dazzling our eyes with such superb designations as Cochrane-Wishart-Baillie or Buller-Fuller-Elphinstone. After this, was it any wonder that mere ordinary commoners should feel they would stand no chance in the struggle for existence unless they aspired incontinently to be Robinson-

Smiths and Higgins-Bakers? You may see nowadays Gwendoline Montgomery-Mullins keeping a suburban sweetshop, and Adolphus Cecil-Jones at the receipt of custom in a Metropolitan railway station. When things have reached this length, what can our old nobility do but 'go them one better' by assuming a quadruplet? Surnames are now threatening to be no longer double-barrelled, but positively to develop into perfect six-shooters. Montagu-Douglas-Scott and Twistleton-Wykeham-Fiennes won't satisfy the ambition of our newest creations; I believe I am right in saying that at one time the member for Westminster was correctly described as Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett Burdett-Coutts-Bartlett Burdett-Coutts, though he has since sloughed off some portion of this reckless superfluity; and everybody must remember the stirring line, 'Long may Long-Wellesley Long-Pole-Wellesley live,' which dates back as far towards the beginning of the 'movement' as the days when Horace Smith wrote 'Rejected Addresses.'

But this is a digression. I love to digress. It is the guarantee against priggishness. I was about to observe, when my own eloquence ran away with me, that double-barrelled surnames are now as thick as blackberries on every country hedge, but that double-barrelled place-names have hitherto succeeded in attracting a very small amount of public attention. And yet, while the compounded and superimposed names of noble or wealthy families are for the most part of quite recent and dubious origin, often embalming genealogical claims which the strict historian can only regard in the light of pious frauds or equally pious aspirations, such compound place-names as Newport Pagnell or Berry Pomeroy are cram-full of genuine historical importance, and attest to our day the social and agrarian arrangements of Norman England. They date back, in point of fact, in many cases to that William the Conqueror with whom so large a proportion of our modern cotton-backed Norman families did *not* come over.

As a general principle, subject to such exceptions as may hereinafter be pointed out, a double-barrelled place-name has for its first half the original title of the town or village to which it is applied, and for the second half the patronymic of the Norman or early English family who were lords of the manor when it first acquired its existing appellation. Thus Tarring Neville, in Sussex, was a manor of the great Norman house of Neville, who themselves assumed their patronymic some generations earlier from a Norman village; and it bore their name as a surname, so to speak, in order to dis-

tinguish it from East Tarring or Tarring Episcopi, another village of the same original name, which had been presented by Athelstane to the Archbishops of Canterbury. So, too, Berry Pomeroy, in Devon, preserves the memory of the Pomeroy family, whose founder, Ralph de Pomeroy, was one of the Conqueror's right-hand men; though the existing mansion, miscalled a castle, and standing in picturesque ivy-clad ruins, was built much later by their successors, the Seymours, and is now the property of the younger branch of that house, the Dukes of Somerset. Throughout England, indeed, unless evidence to the contrary appear, you may take it for granted that wherever a town or village has a double name, the first is, so to speak, its generic or primitive title, and the second is a nickname derived from the family which once held the manor.

The simplest of all such titles are the very transparent ones, like King's Lynn or Earls Barton, which refer to an office, not to a family name, and which bear their meaning on the very face of them. In the first-named instance, for example, Lynn is the common and generic name of a group of towns or villages, known as North Lynn, West Lynn, and King's Lynn, respectively. But before the Reformation the last town of the trio was called Lynn Episcopi, and the manor belonged to the Bishop of Norwich. The Defender of the Faith acquired the episcopal rights in the town by the simple process of confiscation; and ever since the place has been known accordingly as King's Lynn or Lynn Regis. The somewhat similarly named Lyme Regis, in Dorsetshire, owes its suffix to a like origin. Here, the little river Lym gives its name to two villages, the smaller and older of which, now known as Uplyme, occupies the higher part of the little valley, and was granted by Cynewulf, the king of the West Saxons, to the very ancient abbey of St. Mary at Sherborne. The lower part of the valley, however, belonged to the Crown, and in it Edward the First founded one of his royal ports to trade with the towns of Guienne, on which account it was ever after known by its present distinctive title of Lyme Regis. Melcombe Regis, at Weymouth, is another familiar example of the same suffix; while oddly enough the upper valley of the Wey supplies us with another analogical form in Upwey, which stands in the same relation to Weymouth as Uplyme to Lyme Regis.

At Kingskerswell, in Devon, West Country usage has run the two halves of the compound name into a single word, as also

happens at Kingswear and Kingsteignton. Sometimes, too, we get a curious superposition of one such name upon another, as in the familiar case of Kingsbury Episcopi. Here, the very form of the original word shows us at a glance that the place was once the king's bury, that is to say, a villa or manor of the Saxon kings, the last part being the same as in Bury St. Edmunds or Bury in Lancashire; one might compare the whole with that Kingston-upon-Thames where our sovereigns were crowned from Edward the Elder to Ethelred the Redeless, and where the king's stone on which the ceremony took place still dimly preserves in the king's town the half-obliterated memory of its ancient greatness. Kingsbury, however, afterwards passed into the possession of the bishops of the diocese, and so became in the end Kingsbury Episcopi.

As for Earls Barton, that has a very similar and interesting history. All over England, though more particularly in the West Country, a barton is the common name for a farmyard; it is the *tun* or enclosure for the *bear* or harvest. Thus we have Barton-on-the-Humber, Barton Seagrave, and others; besides this Northamptonshire case of Earls Barton, famous for its beautiful old Saxon tower. As for Earls Colne, in Essex, that was an appanage of the De Veres, Earls of Oxford, whose much-defaced monuments may still be seen in a cloister at Colne Priory. The original name of Colne itself is that of the neighbouring river, which has been further commemorated in the Roman castrum we now call Colchester.

Ecclesiastical names occur far more frequently, however, than lay titles of office—which is not astonishing if we remember that just before the Reformation the Church owned nearly half the land in England. Such cases as Abbots Langley, Abbotsbury, Bishop Stortford, and Prior's Hardwick need no explanation. Nunthorpe and Nuneaton, though somewhat more disguised by unsympathetic spelling, balance well with Monklands and Monk Bretton. Sometimes we get the Latinised form, as in Toller-Fratrum, Cerne Abbas, and Whitchurch Canonicorum. An interesting instance is Buckland Monachorum, in Devonshire, on the borders of Dartmoor, once the seat of the richest and cosiest Cistercian abbey in the West of England. The Cistercians were never accused of fanatical asceticism. The distinctive suffix was no doubt intended to mark it off from the other Buckland at the opposite side of the moor, not far from Ashburton. After the fall of monasticism, the abbey passed

to the family of Sir Francis Drake, whose representatives still remain lords of the manor. But it is Monk's Buckland to this day, in spite of three centuries of solid Protestantism.

Most often, however, the second name in such compound words denotes some great Norman or early English family who once held the manor. Melton Constable and Melton Mowbray are self-evident examples. Equally clear are Stoke Mandeville, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Newport Pagnell, and Aston Canteloupe. Sussex, where the Conqueror landed, was particularly cut up among his faithful followers, a large proportion of the lands having been immediately confiscated for their owners' participation in Harold's 'rebellion.' Hence Sussex is specially rich in Norman survivals. Hurst is an old English word for a clearing in a wood; it occurs abundantly in the Weald district, as at Billingshurst, Midhurst, Ashurst, and Farnhurst. But Norman lords added their own names at the end in Hurst Monceux, Hurst Pierpoint, and Hurst Courtray. Still, when a very modern industrial peer like Lord Brassey calls his brand-new mansion Normanhurst on a like analogy, I confess the sham antiquarianism of the name repels me. It seems like muddling and distorting the evidence. Each of the rapes into which Sussex is divided was dominated by the castle of a Norman noble, at Arundel, Bramber, Lewes, Pevensey, and Hastings; the one exception being Chichester, where a Norman bishop sufficiently guaranteed the peace of the district. Horsted Keynes and Tarring Neville are other relics of like origin in the county. I cannot remember, however, that either of the two great local families, the De Warrennes or the Fitz-Alans, has so distinguished itself by an addition to our nomenclature.

Devonshire is another county specially rich in manor names. The Giffords have left their mark at Aveton Gifford, locally pronounced Awton. The Traceys have similarly commemorated themselves at Bovey Tracey, on the little river Bovey, which likewise gives its name to Bovey Heathfield. A Tracey was among the murderers of Thomas à Becket; hence a local proverb most unmetrically observes—

The Traceys
Have the wind in their faces.

As if to avert the evil omen and conciliate the goodwill of the martyred archbishop, Bovey Tracey church is gracefully dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. Beer is a common village name in

Devon ; Beer simple, so to speak, occurs in the splendid mass of chalk country just west of Seaton, while Beer with a difference turns up again further on in Beer Alston and Beer Ferrers. It may surprise you to learn that Beer Alston had a legislator all of its own while Liverpool was voiceless. At Beer Ferrers, again, on the picturesque Tavy, you may still see the monument of Sir William de Ferrers and his wife Isola, who reappear on the ancient stained glass of the windows. Elsewhere in the county the same family gave their name to Churston Ferrers and Newton Ferrers, so distinguished from Newton Abbot, Newton Bushel, and Newton St. Cyres, all in the same county. The modern title of Lord St. Cyres, taken from the last-mentioned of this triplet of Newtons, reminds me that the most historic family in Devon, the Courtenays, have left their sign-manual on Sampford Courtenay. Devonshire is especially rich in names derived from rivers, such as Plymouth and Plympton on the Plym, Tavistock on the Tavy, Teignmouth and Teignton on the Teign, Exeter on the Exe, Colyton and Colyford on the Coly. Indeed, there are few place-names in Devon which do not bear some reference to a neighbouring stream, though sometimes in such corrupt forms as to be scarcely recognisable at first sight, as in the instances of Torrington on the Torridge, and Oakhampton (properly Okemton or Okementon) on the Okement. Amongst these river-named villages it became necessary to distinguish in later times ; and thus Tamerton on the Tamar took the surname of its manorial lords the Foliots, and is Tamerton Foliot to the present day, though since their time it has belonged successively to the Gorges, the Bonviles, the Copplestones, the Bamfylde, and the Radcliffes—all mighty names to conjure with in Devonshire. Nor can I omit to mention in this connection Withycombe Raleigh, Broadwood Kelly, Plympton Erle, and Salcombe Regis. Coffinswell and Copplestone Cross commemorate in another way two old Devonian families, of the latter of which the ancient saw runs with good reason if with doubtful rhyme—

Crocker, Cruwys, and Copplestone,
When the Conqueror came, they were all at home.

Some of our old rhymes, however, are couched in the precisely opposite spirit, and show the contempt and dislike of the native Englishman for the intrusive French lord, who was eating him out of house and home, and who had brought over such a retinue

of hungry followers from the Continent. The North Country saw goes—

William de Coningsby
Came out of Brittany,
With his wife Tiffany,
And his maid Manfras,
And his dog Hardigras.

The descendants of these various gentlemen and ladies (not to speak of the dog, as Mr. Jerome would say) have left their surnames of Mortimer, Vernon, Beauchamp, Harcourt, Tankerville, Beaumont, Courcy, and Granville at various points over the country, which I leave it to the taste and fancy of the reader to identify. But one more instance I must mention at full, that of the family of De Lucy, who have imprinted their name, in spite of Shakespeare, on the beautiful estate of Charlcote Lucy, in Warwickshire.

In a very few instances, of early date, it is a Christian name, not a surname, that marks the lord or lady of the manor. Thus Stoke Edith, in Herefordshire, belonged to Edith, daughter of Earl Godwin and sister of Harold. Its first part means a place surrounded with stocks or stakes—in modern English a stockade; and it may be compared with Stoke Poges, sacred to Gray's 'Elegy,' and with Stoke-upon-Trent, more prosaically connected with the modern pottery trade. Basingstoke and Alverstoke are earlier compounds of the same word, which reappears with a slight twist in Tavistock and Plymstock. In one case we have to deal with the fort of the Basings, in the other with the fort on the Tavy or the Plym. But, as a rule, where a Christian name enters into a place-name, it is as the local saint to whom the church is dedicated, not as the lord or lady of the manor. Cases in point are Mary Tavy and Peter Tavy, on the same river as Tavistock, where the churches are respectively dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and Saint Peter. Note the quaint old English irreverence, which omits in such compounds the prefix Saint, just as it also does at Peterborough, originally Burh, but so called in later times to distinguish it from the other rival place of pilgrimage, also a Burh, now Bury St. Edmunds. Similarly, in early days the cathedral of London was always plain 'Paul's,' and 'Paul's Cross' was never, I think, raised to the dignity of a saintly prefix. The intelligent reader must decide for himself as to Burton Agnes, in Yorkshire.

It does not always do, indeed, to jump at explanations without an accurate knowledge of the district where the name occurs and the history of the particular manor or village. Not far from Andover, for example, stands the church of Abbots Ann, an ancient and frequent source of monastic pleasantries unsuited to the taste of succeeding generations. This quaintly named place belonged to the famous monastery of Hyde Abbey at Winchester, founded by King Alfred in the days when Winchester was still the capital of England; and therefore it naturally deserves the first half of its title. But who was the Ann who gave rise to so much misplaced mediæval humour? Well, the river that flows by the village is called the Ann or Anton. In its alternative form of Ande it gives rise to Andover; while not far off lies Amport, anciently Anam-le-Port, the seat of Lord Winchester, so named from the famous Norman house of De Port, the common ancestors of the St. Johns and the Paulets. This single example may suffice to impress upon the young, the gay, the giddy, and the thoughtless, the necessity for caution and historical inquiry in the investigation of place-names. Guesswork is useless; and, as a general principle of philological inquiry, I would venture to add, 'No scandal about Queen Elizabeth.'

Here is another instance of the need for caution which also incidentally illustrates several of the other principles I have here been endeavouring to inculcate. On the outskirts of Dartmoor, not far from Moreton Hampstead, the Teign flows through the finest gorge in Devon at Fingle Bridge, above which stands the rustic village of Drewsteignton. The Teignton part of this name could not deceive an intelligent child who had passed the sixth standard; it is the town on the Teign, like Kingsteignton and Bishopsteignton below it, and it shows the common Devonian river-name type, as do also Teignmouth and Canonteign. The running together of the words into a single compound is also characteristically Devonian. West-Country people are always as chary of their capital letters as if the compositor made an extra charge for printing them. But how about Drews? What means this mystic prefix? In the days when the Druids were supposed to explain everything, much as electricity does at the present day, learned commentators held that it meant Druid's town on the Teign, and proceeded to wax eloquent on the connection between Fingle Bridge and the Ossianic Fingal. But alas for their speculations, as for those who derived it from Welsh *drws*, a pass

or door (as who should say, the town on the gorge of the Teign), it happens that the earlier form of the word is Drogo's Teignton. Now Drogo was the name of a gentleman who belorded the manor under Henry the Second. This name of Drogo, as Canon Bardsley has shown in his admirable work on English surnames, is regularly modernised as Drew, William Fitz-Drogo being the earlier form which later on gets contracted into Drew and Drewett. Thus Drewsteignton, which ought to be written Drew's Teignton, may rank side by side with Stoke Edith as a manor bearing only the Christian name of an early possessor. Wootton Fitzpaine and other cases of the sort show us the intermediate type, when the casual patronymic was just settling down and hardening into the regular surname.

In the North Country, names of this manorial type are less frequent on the whole, I think, than in the south; but a certain number occur, at times somewhat different in character. Sheriff Hutton, in Yorkshire, is distinguished from the common run of vulgar Huttons elsewhere by the connected peculiarity of its castle and its prefix. The castle was built in the reign of Stephen by Bertrand de Bulmer, sheriff of Yorkshire. It passed with the manor to Geoffrey de Neville, who married Bertrand's only daughter, Emma, but the name of the sheriff, a person of note in his day, has stuck to it ever since. Kirkby by itself means only the church town. Its terminal syllable *by* is the Danish equivalent for the English *ton*; but it is so common a name in the north that it has to be discriminated as Kirkby Lonsdale, Kirkby Thore, Kirkby Stephen, and Kirkby Ravensworth, not to speak of Kirby Wiske and Kirby Moorside, which have lost a letter always slurred in pronunciation. I must confess myself ignorant as to Kirby Malzeard and its ancient history.

In all these cases the reader will no doubt have noticed for himself, with his usual perspicacity, that the names consist of two separate strata, an older and a newer one. As a rule, the older word comes first in the pair, and is the real place-name of the manor or village; the possessive title comes second, is adjectival in meaning, and is generally Norman or post-Norman in origin. But names of somewhat the same sort also preceded the Norman conquest, during the age when the greater part of our local nomenclature really took form. For example, that mighty Norseman Orm built a church for his soul's good (as well he might) at Ormskirk, which still preserves some shadow of his memory;

while earlier still whole groups of old English or Anglo-Saxon clans left their mark on the nomenclature of our entire eastern and south-eastern district. In Sussex, for instance, to stick again to that very typical county, the district between the downs and the sea is full of names of the early clan character. The Gorings, Tarrings, Steynings, and Climpings left traces of their occupation at Goring, Tarring, Steyning, and Climping respectively; the Lullings are still to be found at Lullington, the Rottings at Rottingdean, the Ovings at Ovingdean, the Wilmings at Wilmington, the Berlings at Berling Gap, the Hollings at Hollingsbury, the Worthings at Worthing, and the Billings at Billingshurst. Indeed, almost every name on the sea coast of Sussex, from Hastings in the east to Wittering in the west, belongs to this early English patronymic class. Further inland, however, when we reach the Weald, so long a wild forest, the character of the nomenclature changes abruptly; and instead of these very ancient South-Saxon types we get such purely modern English names as Hayward's Heath, Burgess Hill, Three Bridges, Partridge Green, Forest Row, and North Chapel. The whole region was uninhabited, save by a few sparse charcoal burners, till the Tudor period.

If we take the place-names of England as a whole, we shall find they are thus stratified in layer over layer, with geological regularity. First and lowest comes the Celtic and pre-Celtic stratum—the river and mountain names, of immemorial antiquity; Thames and Severn, Ouse and Avon, Skiddaw and Helvellyn, the Wrekin and the Lizard. These earliest words almost all apply to natural features of the country, though a few belong to the very oldest set of human dwelling-places. Next comes the stratum of Roman names manufactured out of these, the town-names of the Empire—*Londinium* and *Eboracum*, *Camalodunum* and *Lindum*, with their modern corruptions into York and London, Lincoln, Manchester, and Leicester. Then we get once more the vast stratum of Anglo-Saxon clan villages, of Danish and Norwegian pirate camps—Kensington and Islington, Buckingham and Nottingham, Derby, Whitby, and Normanby. Above these, again, we reach the intrusive layer of Norman manor-names, generally superadded to one or other of such earlier elements. Last of all come the Plantagenet and Elizabethan additions, or the purely modern names like Devonport, Cliftonville, Thames Haven, New Brighton. Layer above layer, we can distinguish them all still wherever we go; and it is an interesting intellectual recreation to

take a county map and mark out in different colours the various layers in succession, so as to see at what dates the different portions of the county were successively settled.

Our Norman manor-names themselves often show us many diverse stages in this stratifying process. A Celtic word lies embedded in their midst like a fly in amber. Thus the name of Tamar belongs to the earliest Celtic or pre-Celtic stratum; the river bore that name, no doubt, before Cæsar decided to puzzle all succeeding antiquaries by setting sail for Britain from that much-debated spot, the Portus Itius. When the West Saxon settled as far afield as Devonshire, he took up his abode, among other places, at a *tun* by the Tamar, which he therefore called Tamerton. Later still, the Norman family of Foliot appeared upon the scene, and, dispossessing the Saxon as the Saxon in turn had dispossessed the Celt, added his own surname to his new fief as Tamerton Foliot. All over England the same process has continuously gone on; so that now you can peel off from the modern name one coat after another, as you might do with an onion; till Lancaster goes back through mediæval time to the Roman castra by the Celtic Lune, and till Danish Ashby, the homestead among the ash trees (the English equivalent is Ashton), disengages itself from Norman connection with the later house of De la Zouch, who annexed it. One can wander in this way through the map of England till one loses oneself at last in the philological maze of primæval man and faint uncertain neolithic echoes.

DOCTOR BUSBY.

READERS of the 'Spectator' will remember the account of Sir Roger de Coverley's visit to Westminster Abbey, and the reverential awe with which he stood up before Busby's monument, exclaiming, 'Dr. Busby, a great Man! he whipp'd my grandfather; a very great Man! I should have gone to him myself, if I had not been a Blockhead; a very great Man!'

But though Busby, in the words of old Anthony à Wood, was 'the chief person that educated more youths that were afterwards eminent in the Church and State than any master of his time,' he is now wellnigh forgotten, and visitors to the old Abbey when they pass by his monument no longer 'look as pale as his marble in remembrance of his severe exactions.'

Richard Busby was born at Sutton, otherwise Sutton Nicholas, in Lincolnshire, on September 22, 1606. Beyond the fact that he was the second son of Mr. Richard Busby, a needy citizen of Westminster, nothing is known of his parentage. That his parents were poor there can be no doubt, for it appears from the accounts of the churchwardens of St. Margaret's, Westminster, that young Richard Busby received from the parish 5*l.* to enable him to proceed Bachelor, and a further sum of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* to proceed Master of Arts. The date of his admission to the school over which he was destined so worthily to preside is unknown. It must, however, have been during the headmastership of Dr. John Wilson, who is said to have had 'a faculty more than ordinary in instructing youth.' As there are no lists of minor candidates for this period, there are no means of ascertaining the date of his election on the foundation, whence he was elected (it is said in 1624) to a studentship at Christ Church, Oxford. There he matriculated on February 10, 1625-6, and graduated B.A. October 21, 1628, and M.A. June 18, 1631. After taking his Bachelor's degree Busby became a tutor at Christ Church, where he was 'esteemed a great master of the Greek and Latin tongues, and a complete orator.' In August, 1636, he acted the part of Cratander in Cartwright's *Royal Slave*, before the king and queen at Christ Church, with great applause. So brilliant was his success on this occasion that he seriously thought at one time of adopting

the stage as a profession. Ultimately he took orders, and in 1638 he was provisionally appointed headmaster of Westminster School in the place of Lambert Osbolston, who had been deprived of that office for calling Archbishop Laud 'Hocus Pocus,' 'The Little Vermin,' and other opprobrious nicknames. In July of the following year Busby was installed a Prebendary of Wells, and admitted to the Rectory of Cudworth in Somersetshire. On December 14, 1640, an order of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster was made confirming his appointment to 'the office and roome of Schoolmaster with his house and lodgings thereunto belonging,' and the yearly stipend of 20*l*.

Though deprived of his ecclesiastical preferments during the Long Parliament, Busby was allowed to retain the headmastership of the school throughout the troubles of the Great Rebellion. This was probably owing partly to his great reputation as a schoolmaster, and partly to the influence which he appears to have had with the Parliamentary Commission appointed to visit Eton, Westminster, Winchester, and Merchant Taylors' Schools in 1654. Busby, however, made no attempt to disguise his loyalty, and the school remained steadfast in its adherence to Church and State. In 1642 the Westminster boys assisted in the successful defence of the Abbey against the attack of a Puritan rabble, when 'one Wiseman, a knight of Kent, who had undertaken the conduct of the mobb, for that day's service, was killed by a tile from the battlements.' On the day of Charles the First's execution, 'that black and eternally infamous day of the king's murder,' says Robert South, 'I myself heard, and am now a witness that the king was publicly prayed for in this school, but an hour or two at most before his sacred head was cut off.'

At the Protector's funeral a Westminster boy, named Robert Uvedale, is said to have snatched an escutcheon from the hearse, indignant at the honour paid to one whom he had been taught to regard as a usurper. No wonder that Richard Owen, the Dean of Christ Church and an intimate friend of Oliver Cromwell, declared that 'it would never be well with the nation till Westminster School were suppressed.' In 1657 an attempt was made to shake Busby's supremacy in the school by the second master, Edward Bagshawe, who was supported in his revolt by Dean Owen. Bagshawe was a violent fanatic, and had thought fit to sit in the Abbey with his hat on, for which he had been rebuked by Busby. Busby complained that Bagshawe did not use the

birch enough, while Bagshawe made no secret of 'not overvaluing Mr. Busby's Greek grammar' and violently protested against being made to teach 'the puny boys' in the first and second forms. Busby lodged a formal complaint against the second master for his insubordination, and Bagshawe was suspended from his post by the Commission in May 1658.

Busby's services to the royal cause were promptly recognised at the Restoration. On July 5, 1660, he was installed a Prebendary of Westminster, and on August 11 following he was made Treasurer and Canon Residentiary of Wells. In October of the same year the University of Oxford, without putting him to the necessity of taking his B.D., conferred upon him the degree of D.D. At the coronation of Charles the Second, in April 1661, Busby carried the ampulla of the new regalia. As Proctor for the Chapter of Bath and Wells, he was one of those who approved and subscribed the Book of Common Prayer in the Convocation, which met in June 1661.

When the plague commenced its ravages in London in 1665, Busby removed his scholars to the College House at Chiswick, demolished some twenty years ago to make way for a row of genteel semi-detached villas. But the plague, William Taswell tells us in his autobiography, 'spread its baneful influence even to this place. Upon this Dr. Busby called his scholars together, and in an excellent oration acquainted them that he had presided as Head Master over the school twenty-five years, in which time he never deserted it till now. That the exigency of affairs required every person should go to his respective home.' The school was closed for some ten months, and did not re-assemble again until May in the following year. A few months afterwards the Great Fire of London broke out, and the scholars, headed by John Dolben, Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, marched off, Taswell says, 'to put a stop, if possible, to the conflagration.'

Humphrey Prideaux, writing from Oxford to his friend John Ellis on February 2, 1677, says: 'Old Busby hath long talked to us of a benefaction he intends to bestow upon us for the erecteing of a catachist lecture [in] the University, but hath soe many cautions in his head, and adjoynes such hard conditions with it that the University cannot receive it. The old man a little before Christmas spit blood, and thought he should have immediately dyed, but when I was with him I thought him as well as ever I saw him since I knew him.'

Busby took part in the coronation of James the Second in April 1685, as bearer of the orb with the cross. In December 1691 he had another serious attack of illness. Luttrell writes in his Diary for the 29th of that month: 'Dr. Busby, of Westminster School, is given over: beleived he will be succeeded by Mr. Knipe therein.' Busby, however, recovered, and Thomas Knipe, who held the post of second master, had to wait a few years longer.

Busby died on April 6, 1695, in the eighty-ninth year of his age, and was buried in the Abbey under the black and white marble pavement of the Sacarium. His monument stands against the wainscot of the choir, opposite the south transept, where he is represented in a reclining position by the sculptor, Francis Bird, holding a pen in one hand and a book in the other.

Busby was an excellent scholar, a most successful teacher, and a very severe disciplinarian. He guided the destinies of the school with a firm hand and an unerring eye for nearly fifty-seven years, retaining his post through the Civil War, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, and the Revolution, thus serving three dynasties, and witnessing three changes of worship. To him alone is the credit due for the extraordinary success of the school during his long and eventful reign. The best testimonial of a head-master is the success of his scholars, and no master perhaps ever had so many successful pupils as Busby. He is said to have boasted that at one time sixteen out of the whole bench of bishops had been educated by him. John Dryden, Philip Henry, John Locke, Sir Christopher Wren, Robert South, George Hooper, Henry Aldrich, Sir Jonathan Trelawny, Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, Francis Atterbury, Matthew Prior, and Barton Booth, and numbers of other distinguished men received their education at Westminster under Busby. Of his severity, which has become almost proverbial, there is plenty of evidence. He is said to have declared that 'the rod was his sieve, and whoever could not pass through that was no boy for him.' Philip Henry thus quaintly records how he happened to fall one day under Busby's displeasure. 'Once being monitor of the chamber, and being sent forth to seek one that play'd truant ('twas Nath. Bul. afterwards a Master of Pauls school) I found him out where hee had hid himself, and at his earnest request promised I would say I could not find him, which I wickedly did; the next morning being examin'd by Mr. Busby, where hee was and whether hee saw mee, hee sayd, yes, hee

did, at which I wel remember Mr. Busby turn'd his eye towards mee, and sayd *καὶ σὺ τέκνον*, and whipt mee, which was the only time I felt the weight of his hand, and I deserv'd it: Hee appointed mee also a Penitential copy of Latin verses which I made and brought him, and then hee gave mee six pence, and received mee again into his Favor.' There was, we are told, 'an agreeable mixture of severity and sweetness in his manners, so that if his carriage was grave, it was at the same time civil and full of good-nature, as his conversation was always modest and learned.' It is certain that Busby, notwithstanding his excessive love of the birch, gained the veneration and love of many of his pupils. Dryden throughout his life retained a great respect for him, Atterbury spoke of him as 'a man to be revered very highly,' William King declared that his 'memory to me shall be for ever sacred,' while Philip Henry frequently referred to his old master in terms of the deepest gratitude. In spite, too, of Pepys's gossip about his 'devilish covetousness,' there can be no doubt either of Busby's unbounded liberality or of his unaffected piety. He made a number of benefactions to Christ Church, Oxford, including a gift of 250*l.* towards the rebuilding of 'the House' at the Restoration. He rebuilt the Parish Church at Willen in Buckinghamshire, endowed the Vicarage with the great tithes, and added a library for the use of the Vicar and the neighbouring clergy. He was a liberal benefactor to the Cathedral at Wells, and the black and white marble pavement in the choir of Westminster Abbey was his gift. He left an estate in Buckinghamshire of 525*l.* per annum, and personal property to the amount of nearly 5,000*l.* for the relief and support of such poor ministers in Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Middlesex, and Buckinghamshire 'who have a great Flock and small Revenue under the value of fifty pounds a year, and are painful and diligent in the ministry,' and for other charitable purposes.

In his will dated July 10, 1693, and proved on February 19, 1697, he declares that it had been his constant resolution from the age of thirty-one 'to settle such estate as God in His great mercy shall entrust me with upon such charitable uses as may lead to God's glory and the relief and comfort of good people in necessity.' Thirteen trustees were appointed by Busby to carry out the purposes of his will, and the vacancies in this number were to be filled up by the choice of the survivors. These trustees are always 'old Westminsters.' They meet twice a year for the

transaction of business, and dine together in the Jerusalem Chamber after the June meeting.

Busby's publications are neither very numerous nor important. They consist for the most part of grammars, and expurgated editions of the classics compiled for the use of the school. According to tradition some of these grammars were the composition of his scholars, revised and corrected by himself. Several of these compilations, in a more or less altered form, were in use at Westminster some sixty years ago. Hearne records that after the Latin grammar came out Busby 'was continually altering of it, almost every hour, and 'twas usual with him to make his scholars get those alterations by heart, tho' they had been masters of his grammar before.' Hearne adds that he had also 'heard some that knew the Dr. very well, say that he was a better judge of other men's compositions than a good composer himself, though he was certainly a very clear-headed man.' Riley's well-known portrait of Busby sitting down, with his favourite pupil Philip Henry standing by him, hangs in the hall at Christ Church. The mezzotint of this portrait by Watson must be familiar to many. There are also portraits of Busby in the Chapter House and in the Common Room of Christ Church, where there is a bust of him by Rysbrack. All these likenesses are said to have had a common origin from a plaster cast taken after his death, Busby having steadfastly refused during his life to sit for his portrait.

There are curiously few relics of Busby at Westminster. Some books, which he presented to the school, a chair of doubtful authenticity, an oil portrait, a bust, and one of his account-books are all that remain. Busby's account-book begins with a list of the school for Lady Day quarter, 1656, which gives the names of 241 boys, thirty-seven of whom were apparently boarders in Busby's own house. Though many of them were sons of the nobility, they were not always profitable scholars, it would seem, for we read that 'Lord Maddeston [Maidstone] left 2 Beds and furniture of Cr. [chamber] but pd. nothing for himself, or man, either entrance, board, schoole, or attendance in time of sicknes at Nursery,' and there are other entries of the like nature.

A quaint letter written by Lady Caithness to Patrick Smyth of Methven Castle gives us an interesting peep into school life at Westminster towards the close of Busby's reign. 'Colin is a busy man at his lessons; is every day at School all this winter before 7 o'clock and his wax candle with him, and doth not come out till

past 11, and they return at 1 and stay until near six. This was far from his diet at home, and in the great cold school he sits the whole day over without a hat or cap, and all the windows broke, and yet thanks be to God he takes very well with it, though he never seeth a fire but in my house. At the beginning his fellow scholars were hard on him upon the account of his nation, but he doth now hold up pretty well, either at scotching or boxing with them. However, I fear I lose a Scotsman, for he begins to get their words and accent. I wish I had your eldest son at school with Colin. They are bravely taught both to be scholars and orators at Doctor Busby's school at Westminster, where my son is. I was frightened at the report of the severity of the masters, but my child now six months hath been at it and has never got a frown from any of the masters: on the contrary, he is but too much made of. The Masters are wise discreet men, and children of 6 years old are in the first form. Colin was entered to the third, and in summer is to go to the fourth, where they learn Greek.'

A few anecdotes of Busby's caustic humour have been preserved out of the many which have perished. Everyone knows the familiar story of his apologising to Charles the Second, whom he was escorting over the school, for keeping on his hat in the royal presence, on the ground that it would never do to let the boys believe there was a greater man in the world than himself. Once in a large company he sat at table between Mrs. South and Mrs. Sherlock, when the conversation turned upon wives. Busby, being asked his opinion, said that he believed wives in general were good, though, to be sure, there might be a bad one *here* and a bad one *there*.

'Will you permit me, giant, to pass to my seat?' said an Irish baronet to Busby one day in a coffee-house. 'Certainly, pigmy,' said the Doctor. 'Sir,' foamed the Irishman, 'I alluded to the vastness of your intellect.' 'And I, sir,' quietly replied Busby, 'to the size of your own.'

The famous Father Petre, who had been educated under Busby at Westminster, met him one day in St. James's Park. Petre accosted his old master, but Busby declared that he could not recognise him in that dress, and Petre had to introduce himself. 'But, sir,' said Busby, 'you were of another faith when you were under me; how dared you change it?' 'The Lord had need of me,' replied the priest. 'The Lord had need of you, sir!'

retorted Busby ; ' why I have read the Scriptures as much as any man, and I never knew that the Lord had need of anything but once, and then it was an ass.' We may conclude these reminiscences of Dr. Busby with an anecdote from which it appears that he sometimes exercised lictorial powers over others besides his scholars. One hot afternoon, as Busby was correcting themes in the school-room, there was a great noise of juniors playing in Little Dean's Yard. Busby twice sent down the monitor to stop the riot, but as this had no effect he despatched several big boys with orders to bring up the chief culprit. A lean Frenchman happened to be standing in Dean's Yard, enjoying the view of the Abbey and smiling at the games of the boys. Him Busby's emissaries seized, and dragged, frantically resisting, up the schoolroom steps. ' Horse him,' said Busby quietly, when the young rogues had declared that ' this was the man who had made all the noise,' and to the unspeakable delight of the whole school the Frenchman was well whipped, and then hustled out. Boiling with rage, he hastened to the nearest coffee-house and there wrote out a challenge, which he sent to Busby by a street porter. The Doctor had no sooner read the paper than he said, ' Fetch me a rod, and horse this man,' and the porter was forthwith served like his principal. He returned to the coffee-house with starting eyes to tell what had happened to him, and this time the Frenchman, fairly vanquished, could only exclaim, ' C'est un diable.'

A FATAL RESERVATION.

BY R. O. PROWSE,

AUTHOR OF 'THE POISON OF ASPES.'

BOOK V.—Continued.

CHAPTER III.

Daring the event to the teeth.

It was late afternoon of the fifth day from Leigh's death. Gilbert was slowly pacing a path that ran between a wilderness of shrubbery and the remnant of a lawn, upon which a ruined arbour looked out from among trees, in a distant and neglected corner of the Oaks garden. The shrubbery and the clump of trees which held the arbour entirely enclosed the place, except for a thin slip of opening, beyond which stretched the park. A dreary air of abandonment and disuse lay upon the spot, to which the mouldering summer-house, from whose roof the black, weather-stained thatch had fallen in places, gave a look of conscious desolation. It was still early spring, and into the air, which during the day had been warm even to oppressiveness, an insidious chill was beginning to steal as the sun dropped, and the evening mist, little by little, crept over and settled on the park.

Gilbert paced on, his footsteps falling noiselessly on the soft grass-grown path, and his slowly moving figure, scarcely discernible at a distance against the dark background of the shrubbery, seemed to offer no relief to the sombre character of his surroundings. His face was pale, was almost haggard; there was a nervous twitching of his lips, and in his eyes, as he raised them from time to time from the ground and looked over the park, there was something more than the restlessness which gave his features their peculiar uncertainty of expression.

It was a cruel, treacherous, vindictive face. In this solitude, with no eye but the forgotten eye of Heaven upon him, there was no need for concealment. For once the passions of the man were mirrored without disguise or shame in the dark surface of his face. It was cruel and treacherous and vindictive, but it was the

face of a man resolute and unflinching, who would not easily be turned from his purpose. Cunning and determination, stealth and strength, were blended in those features, where perhaps not an hour before had played the smile of courtesy and friendship.

Presently he paused in his walk and leaned against a stripling birch, his eyes wandering over the misty park to the bed of clouds into which the circle of the drooping sun was sinking. His lips moved; he gave utterance to his thought.

'It is impossible to wait,' he murmured. 'At any moment he may come and tell her the truth. And what should I gain by waiting? Her love?' He laughed. 'No, I don't hope for much from her love. It is rather in her hatred—of him—I shall find my account. And what if I fail? His position may be strengthened when we come to the reckoning that cannot lie far ahead. But that is all. Besides, she might not tell him. And I shall not fail; I *will* not fail,' he muttered. 'But,' he added, 'if my chances were a thousand times worse, I would run the risk for her sake.'

He moved on a few paces, then paused again and took out his watch.

'The others will not be back for an hour or more; she is still alone,' he thought. He continued his walk, still keeping the watch in his hand.

He paused once more. 'I will go to her,' he said aloud, and, turning round as he spoke, he moved towards the house, gradually quickening his pace. The customary mask had fallen again upon his features.

When he reached the house he asked a servant for Lady Keyworth, and was told that she was alone in the dining-room. He at once crossed the hall and went to her.

The sun had set, leaving a flame of colour above the clouds behind which it had sunk, the light of it coming through the western window, to be reflected in the old oak panels on the wall. The room looked dim and shadowy. In the waning light the glow of the fire was beginning to make itself felt, and to show on the dark wainscot, on the ceiling, on the curtains, on the polished surface of the furniture. The recesses of the other windows looked dreary and comfortless, and as many of the portraits as lay outside the gleam of the firelight hung in depths of shadow. The house was very still. The servants' offices lay apart, and were shut off by heavy swing-doors. Mrs. Nixon, May, and the Major had not yet returned from Smeltington.

Full in the firelight, with its ruddy glow dyeing her dark hair and repeating itself in the depths of her unfathomable eyes, her face and figure thrown up in still outline against the background of shadow beyond, sat Nora, looking sometimes into the hollows of the fire, and sometimes out through the western window at the lurid painting of the sky, at the leafless trees motionless in the still air, and away beyond the garden at the evening mist, as it stole slowly and stealthily across the park. From off the walls the dead looked at her—looked at her with the same never-changing expression in their watchful eyes and sad, still faces—looked at her now when, by virtue of her beauty and the triumphs she had achieved by it, she might have claimed a first place among them, as they had looked years ago when once, in her great-uncle's time, she had strayed as a little child into the big dim room in just such a light as this, and had run out again, frightened and in tears, because all their eyes were upon her.

All trace of the conflict of a little while before had passed from Gilbert's face; there was no betrayal of emotion in his manner; he spoke as lightly and pleasantly as he was accustomed to speak. He sat down on the side of the hearth opposite to Nora, with his back to the western light, just out of the glow of the fire. His position was well chosen, for, as the shadows deepened, she would altogether lose sight of his face. For a little while they talked of such matters as the circumstances of the moment suggested: of the sunset, of the chillness of the evening, of the grateful warmth of the fire, of her reason for sitting in that room. But presently, with the change of manner which accompanies the revival of a question of some interest, she said:

'You were telling me last night of your meeting with Mr. Leigh. You seemed surprised, I think, at my having heard nothing about him from my husband; from this I gather that you know he has met Mr. Leigh. Do you think you can tell me a little more about it now?'

His face showed nothing; but the subject she had introduced was the one which he intended should be introduced. There was an almost imperceptible pause before he answered her.

'If you remember,' he said, speaking with a certain gravity, 'I spoke under the impression that your husband had told you he had met him.'

Nora smiled. 'Mr. Gilbert, I am sure you know women far

too well not to appreciate the effect of such a caution as that. I am as curious as woman can be. Please go on.'

Gilbert moved in his chair uneasily. There was again an almost imperceptible pause before he spoke.

'I forget where I left off last night,' he said, with the air of a man who, having entered his protest and had it rejected, feels that the consequences of compliance cannot fairly be laid to his charge.

'You have told me nothing beyond the circumstances under which you met Mr. Leigh in London. You happened, you said, to become the owner of the house in which he lived.'

'Yes. I was going over it for the first time when, to my amazement, I discovered that Mr. Leigh and his daughter were among its present occupants. It was many years since we had met, and I found that his troubles had told upon him. His mind really was going fast. Of course you have seen photographs of Miss Leigh as a girl? The troubles of life have told upon her too. She looks a little worn; but, for all that, she is a handsome woman, with a singularly winning expression.'

'I suppose they told you my husband had been to them?'

'Yes; Miss Leigh said he had discovered them some time in June, and had been their constant visitor up to the time of my coming there. She spoke very feelingly of his—of his kindness.'

'You are an old friend of Mr. Leigh's?' she asked.

'One of his oldest,' said Gilbert, feelingly.

'And my husband, of course, knows that you have found them?'

'Yes; they have told him so.'

'Are they in London still?'

Again he paused, though but for an instant, before he answered her.

'No; no, they are not,' he replied, and Nora found that her curiosity was provoked by the hesitation in his manner.

'Forgive this cross-examination,' she apologised, 'but may I ask whether you know where they are?'

'I think I told you I met with my accident as I was returning from my first and only visit to them in Burders Street,' he answered, not evasively, but a little absently, as if he had not heard Nora's question.

'And you have seen them since—where?' she repeated quietly.

'In Smeltington,' he said, with quick decision this time.

'Indeed! In Smeltington!' she echoed. 'How strange that they should come to Smeltington! I suppose my husband gave you their address?'

'Well—' he said. 'Well, no; not exactly.'

He was leaning forward a little, so that the firelight fell on his face. She was watching him intently.

'Are we not making rather an absurd mystery of this?' she asked. 'My husband has probably not told me because—well, considering what Mr. Leigh is, it is easy enough to imagine reasons for his not telling me. They are his relations, and it is his affair—not mine. I am perfectly willing to let people keep their disagreeable secrets. But having been good enough to tell me so much, don't you think you may as well tell me the rest?'

He had moved again, and his face was once more in shadow.

'The story is simply this,' he said, still speaking slowly and with reluctance. 'Through some mistake in the train I reached Smeltington the other evening an hour and a half before the Major. At the station I met your husband. Weren't you rather surprised at that?'

'Merely because I had imagined that he was going to Waveney by an earlier train. He missed it, I suppose. And I presume he took you there.'

'I went with him,' said Gilbert. 'He told me he was going to see a friend, and, having an hour and a half to wait, I said I would go with him as far as the door.'

'He did not tell you he was going to see Mr. Leigh?'

'No; not when we started.'

Nora, knowing Waveney's aversion to Gilbert, was not much surprised at this; but though in reality her interest in the matter was not very deep, the peculiar reserve in Gilbert's manner kept her curiosity alive.

'I suppose, in cases of this kind, secrets have to be kept rather close,' she said.

'That's it,' he assented.

There was a pause. In spite of herself Nora could not leave the subject alone.

'It seems curious that they should have come to Smeltington,' she reflected. 'I suppose their coming must have been my husband's doing.'

'I can't say,' said Gilbert.

'Smeltington, certainly, is a place in which I should think a person in Mr. Leigh's position would be as safe as he could be anywhere. But still it seems curious—with all of us so near.'

'I wonder your husband didn't think of that.'

'I should have supposed Mr. Leigh would have returned to the Continent.'

'Yes; that is what one would have supposed.'

'For his daughter's sake as well as his own.'

'Especially for her sake, I think.'

Gilbert's manner was beginning to annoy her. This reticence of his seemed foolish and unmeaning. He was trifling with her.

'Of course you saw Mr. Leigh the other evening?' she asked.

He leaned forward again so that she could see his face in the firelight. She was startled; a misgiving seized her; something in its expression made her vaguely afraid; in some curious way she felt that her own words mocked her.

'No,' he said.

'You did not see him?'

He was silent, and she repeated her question.

'No,' he said again.

'But how was that?'

He was still leaning forward so that she could see his face in the firelight, and his eyes were fixed on hers. 'Mr. Leigh,' he said, 'poor Leigh is dead.'

'Dead!'

'Yes; Leigh is dead.'

'Ah!' she exclaimed, and it seemed at last as if she understood him. 'And his daughter is living by herself?' she asked.

He took a piece of paper from his pocket, and handed it to her. 'This is the address of the house your husband has taken for her,' he said.

Some minutes passed before they spoke again.

She looked at him searchingly, but he did not flinch. She went over the facts again and again. But she could find no flaw. It was impossible that he should have invented a story so circumstantial and minute—a story which, with the paper she then held in her hand, she could so easily disprove. That paper seemed to her as proof. Besides, what object could he have in deceiving her? And he had imposed upon her with his manner; she believed she had drawn the truth from him.

It was less the facts taken by themselves than the sense in

which he had made her read them that brought her to the conclusion he desired. She drew the inference he intended that she should draw. With the rapidity of thought she lived again through scene after scene of the past months, and it seemed to her that she had suddenly become possessed of the key to a hundred circumstances that had perplexed her. Waveney's weariness of their world; the change that had come into his manner towards her; his silence; his depression; his tacit dissatisfaction with all she did; his many unexplained absences from home—all were clear to her now. *Toujours la femme!* it was the obvious explanation, after all.

In the confusion of her feelings it would have been hard to say what emotion was predominant. She had never loved him, yet, indifferent as she was, the *spretæ injuria formæ* had its sting for her, and the thought of this unknown woman, however matters might stand between them, aroused an unsuspected element in her nature. The consciousness that he had deceived her, the thought that while he had been darkening her life with his meaningless protests and wearisome gloom he might himself have been tasting the sweets of existence and living freely in the light of this other woman's love, filled her with exceeding bitterness, with a new and passionate resentment. At that moment she hated him—hated him not merely for the possible wrong he had done her, but for the countless little unforgotten and unforgiven acts of his her memory held in its store—hated him as a disappointed and unforgiving woman does hate the man who she thinks has done her a wrong. Perhaps her strongest feeling at that moment was a longing for retaliation.

Gilbert was the first to speak.

'Lady Keyworth,' he said, very gently, 'forgive what I have done. I know I must have caused you pain. But you have forced this story from me. I ask you at least to—to reserve your judgment until you have seen your husband.'

He saw the flush mount to her cheek; she made no answer.

The lurid painting had faded from the sky; the twilight was deepening in the room. The end opposite to the western window, where the reflection of the afterglow had shone in the panels, was full of the gathering shadow. The dusk hung over the portraits on the walls, and covered them as with a curtain.

'You may be sure,' he continued, speaking with the same accent of gentle consideration, 'this will not go beyond me. I am

something more than an acquaintance, remember. I have known your family for many years. I am something more than a friend of yours, Lady Keyworth. Believe me, you have my sympathy very keenly.'

The gentleness of his words soothed her. For once her self-possession, her indifference, her cynicism had dropped away, and the woman within her had asserted itself. The first bitterness of her anger was beginning to give place to other feelings—to a sense of weariness, of loneliness, of desolation—to a dreary presentiment of more troubles to come.

And he, as he looked at her in the intimate dreamy gloom of the twilight, with the glow of the fire falling full upon her, felt that influence steal over him which Waveney had felt years before. Upon him, too, was the craving for possession; to him, too, it seemed that, if need be, the world would be well lost for her sake.

'Old friends as we are, Nora,' the word fell out, 'I know I have no right in any way to trespass on your confidence. Yet circumstances have so drawn us together that I know you will forgive what might otherwise seem an intrusion. It is my sympathy with you that makes me speak. I have seen—and seen with pain—the unhappiness of your marriage.'

He was forgiven; he had no need to apologise. The pride which at another time would have made her resent and repel his sympathy was less strong within her now than a certain weak feeling of dependence. Besides, as he knew so much, what would she gain by reserve?

'It has proved a wretched failure,' she murmured, though she spoke rather to herself than to him.

'I have known it,' he said; 'I have known it. Yet, if I may say so, I think—I believe, in spite of all, he has meant kindly to you. I do not wish to dwell upon what must be painful, but I think you should remember that he knew Miss Leigh as a girl, and that their friendship is a very old story. It makes a difference,' he added.

'I would to heaven I had never come in the way of their friendship!' she said, speaking in that deep, cold voice of hers.

'It is my wish, it is my wish,' he repeated fervently.

He had watched her narrowly from the first. He had seen the reflection of her anger sweep across her face, as the image of the storm-cloud sweeps by the surface of the lake; but he had

seen, too, the likeness of a softer feeling—a feeling which told of weakness and gave him hope. He felt that the moment had come for him to speak. He determined to make his supreme attempt.

‘Nora, I can keep back the truth no longer,’ he said, rising to his feet and moving towards her. ‘I have spoken for your husband. I have done my utmost to be faithful to our friendship. But it is impossible. This is the truth. I loved you long before he did. He robbed me of you. I should have asked you to be my wife that season in London, but I fancied the time had not quite come for it, and drew back. Afterwards, however, I repented of my indecision, and determined to tell you the next time we met. The next time we met you were engaged to him.’

He paused; he waited for her to speak. He was so near to her that their shadows on the wall seemed to meet.

‘But time has brought us together. He has left you free. Why should not I give you the happiness he has kept from you? Why should not——’

She had risen slowly from the chair, risen to her full height, risen at his first effort to touch her.

‘Stop!’ she said, suddenly regaining her natural assurance. ‘You have fairly taken me in. I had no suspicion of this. I have allowed you to speak to me as I have because I thought you were sincere. But you have made an immense mistake. Time brought us together! No,’ she laughed, ‘neither time nor pique could ever bring us together. I have seen a little too much of the world to do anything so miserably foolish as that. You have played your cards, played them cleverly enough, Mr. Gilbert, but—you have lost!’

As he saw her standing before him, with that superb beauty of hers shown in its full perfection as he had never seen it before, his self-control forsook him. The mockery of her words and the contempt written in her scornful face roused and lashed him to fury.

‘No,’ he cried, going to her and seizing her by the hand, ‘I have not lost. I have spoken; I have gone too far. I love you, Nora, and I swear——’

‘Let me go! let me go!’ she gasped, struggling to free herself from his hold.

‘No,’ he muttered, drawing her closer towards him, ‘I cannot——’

By a strong effort she put out her other hand and seized the bell.

In an instant he had released her and fallen back.

They stood fronting each other, the firelight on their faces, barely the length of the hearthrug between them.

There was a moment of the intensest stillness. In his eyes was the light of thwarted rage and desire; in hers at that moment not a stain of fear. He was the first to speak.

'What next?' he asked, the words hissing through his closed teeth. 'What do you intend to do? Mind whom you tell of this, or I——'

She stopped him by the very power of the contempt that was in her.

'Your threats come too late,' she said mockingly. 'It is for me to make what terms I please. And knowing you for the treacherous, cowardly villain you are, I make no terms with you. You leave this house within an hour. I will see that my husband pays my debt to you at once.'

The servant entered the room almost as the last words left her lips.

'See that the carriage is at the door in an hour's time,' she said, addressing the servant, 'to take Mr. Gilbert to the station.'

Then, without another word, she turned and left the room.

The servant followed her.

Gilbert stood alone in the gathering gloom of the twilight, in the familiar glow of the fire, under the sad, still gaze of the dead.

CHAPTER IV.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and weary!

THE days before the burial moved very slowly for Maggie. Waveney was not with her. He left Smeltington the morning after Leigh died, and the passing days did not bring him back. The dreary task of preparing for the funeral and meeting the many wretched little claims and exactions of such a time fell to her share alone.

His absence perplexed and distressed her.

He wrote, but his letter, in which she read a conflict between emotion and some restraining motive for reserve, offered no sufficient explanation. The letter troubled her scarcely less than his

absence. This treatment appeared like the climax of all that had been bewildering in his conduct. It distracted her, it hurt her; and the pain of it quickened her memory and perceptions as it made the need of some solution more urgent.

During the days of her father's brief illness, the incident of her meeting with Lady Keyworth had been almost forgotten. She had given all her thought to him: from the moment of his seizure she had known that only a few days—possibly only a few hours—of life were left to him, and while they had lasted other matters had dropped from her thoughts. But now she had time to think. The remembrance of all that had been strange in Waveney's manner and conduct came back to her—his sudden humours, his irony, his self-accusation, the scene in the church, the scene by the canal; and the shadowy dread, which had seized her momentarily at Mrs. Latimer's, stood forth and gained substance as the light of her present reflections fell upon it.

Little by little it grew more definite, more insistent, more possessive. It held her; it claimed and compelled her acceptance. The momentary misgiving became a settled fear, and the fear gained the strength of a conviction. A few inquiries would have put the matter beyond doubt. Another woman might have hastened to make them and free herself from the travail of suspense. It was not Maggie's nerve that now failed her. Her nerve had been shaken, but it was not want of courage that kept her silent and passive. The feeling which closed her lips was rather that to make such inquiries would be an act of disloyalty which conjecture alone would not justify. It was a cruel struggle she had with her fears; often and bitterly enough she upbraided herself for the hold they had gained upon her; but it was at least within her power to abstain from any act of mistrust. That motherly instinct, which entered for so much into her love, saved her from that desire for retaliation with which the discovery of such a wrong would have inspired most women in her place. Her love for him remained unchanged. She had the clue to a thousand things that had perplexed her, and she knew him well enough to read them in their true sense. She felt that for months Waveney had been in the grip of a great temptation. The meaning of those words of his in the church was plain enough to her now, and she was disposed to take herself to task for not having understood them at the time. Surely she was to blame for that! It had been the habit of her life to excuse him—to try to put herself in his place,

to see things as they looked to him. The old habit was still strong within her. Moreover, as she looked back through the past his love was revealed to her in a new light, and the strength of it was brought home to her as it had never been brought home to her before. There was a kind of aching consolation about that. But the misery of these slowly moving days was supreme. It was the instinct of her nature to forgive; patience was the habit of her life; but no store of patience could be of much help to her in the fear of so immense a disappointment. The agony of her grief had its way. The one great hope of her life was in jeopardy; the one ray of light that had shone into the darkness of these latter years was in danger of being put out. And hour after hour despair gained on her, in spite of her splendid courage.

One friend she had who came to her.

The kindness, good sense, and tact of Mrs. Latimer made her visits exceedingly welcome. It was Maggie who had asked her to come. Mrs. Latimer had not been to the house while her father was alive; but in the greatness of her need she was glad to use the offer of friendship once made to her, and to bring Mrs. Latimer to her aid. The promise had been ungrudgingly fulfilled. Mrs. Latimer had the wisdom to abstain from any attempt to force her confidence, but stray facts would occasionally drop out which let some light for her into the secret of the dead man's past.

The day of the burial—the fifth from poor Leigh's death—at last came round.

The humble little procession left early in the afternoon, while the smile was still on the face of the spring day—a day full of 'hope and love and youth and gladness.' Mrs. Latimer had consented to go with Maggie to the grave. They moved heavily along in the ungainly black coach amid the dismal trappings of death. The glimpses she had of the outer world seemed strangely unfamiliar to Maggie. She felt it was a world from which she herself was cut off; the passing moments appeared to her curiously removed and unreal.

Once, taking her hand in her own, Mrs. Latimer said gently, wishing to comfort her:

'I think we do the dead wrong to grieve overmuch. The greater his sorrows here—and you tell me *his* were very great—the better it is for him, don't you think, that they should be mercifully ended?'

'Yes, I know it, I know it,' Maggie murmured. 'But it all

seems so cruel—so cruel. His sorrows were not his due. And those who should have suffered, that man and woman——’

‘A woman wronged your father?’

The interest with which Mrs. Latimer asked the question made Maggie turn and look at her. ‘Yes, a woman wronged him,’ she said.

‘Perhaps she has repented, Maggie. Perhaps she has repented and known the terror of remorse. If so, you may pity her, Maggie. I think you might almost forgive her.’

‘It would be hard,’ Maggie said. ‘But perhaps I should try.’

They scarcely spoke again for the rest of the drive.

The first part of the ceremony passed off quietly enough. They left the chapel and moved slowly to the grave. The afternoon was still warm and bright, lit with the gladness of spring, full of the promise of life—Nature, from her meanest flower, full of the joy of living. So far all had gone smoothly. But as the clergyman proceeded with the service, and the coffin was being made ready to be laid in the earth, a cry suddenly broke from some one standing by, and before any could help her Mrs. Latimer had dropped to the ground. The clergyman paused, and Maggie fell to her knees by her friend’s side and loosened her dress. Two of the undertaker’s men, however, relieved her of her charge, and carried Mrs. Latimer to the lodge at the cemetery gates. The service was then quietly proceeded with.

And so poor Leigh was laid to rest. The years of his strength were but years of labour and sorrow; full indeed of misery had been the life which was brought to an end.

When all was over, when the last words of the service had passed away, Maggie still lingered a little by the grave. Her mind had seized the whole truth. He was dead—dead and gone from her. There was an end to the sacrifice she had made for him; she was released and free; but her thought clung to him with passionate yearning, an immeasurable sense of loneliness possessed her.

The men approached who were waiting to fill up the grave. She knew it was a sign that she must go. With a last look she turned away, and moved, with faltering steps and eyes blinded with their unchecked stream of grief, towards the lodge to join her friend.

To her astonishment she found on reaching the lodge that Mrs. Latimer was gone. She inquired the direction she had

taken. The woman of the lodge answered by pointing to a foot-path that led to Smeltington across some fields, and Maggie could just make out Mrs. Latimer approaching the end of the first field. As she looked, the woman gave her a scrap of paper. On it she read, scribbled in pencil :

'I cannot return with you. Don't attempt to follow me, nor to come to my house. I am quite well. I can give you no explanation except that I have seen your father's name on the coffin. I knew him once.'

Maggie had buried her father under his own name.

CHAPTER V.

Camerado, I will give you my hand !

Will you give me yourself ? Will you come travel with me ?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live ?

He came to her at last.

It was the afternoon of the day after the burial. Maggie was sitting in her little room, looking for him, when she heard a knock at the street door, and, a minute later, his familiar voice in the hall. The sitting-room door opened, and Waveney came in, looking so haggard, so terribly changed from his old bright, well-tended, rather magnificent self, that involuntarily the cry broke from her, 'Ah, Waveney !'

Her first impulse was to go to him ; to draw him to her bosom ; to ask him a hundred questions about himself and his reason for keeping away from her ; to make up to her yearning heart for what she had suffered in his absence. Instead, she fell back from him. She moved to the fireplace and stood quite still, holding the chimney-piece. She never took her eyes from his face.

Not a word of greeting passed Waveney's lips as he seated himself in the chair from which she had risen. She felt as she looked at him as if she were being carried through a long period of time. It seemed to her as if he had been in the room many years, and years, too, in which an immense deal had happened. Suddenly the movement ceased. Waveney grew smaller than his true size, and the whole scene appeared to her indescribably fixed

and natural. She had, without doubt, in a dream or elsewhere, lived through this scene before.

Waveney was the first to speak. He rose from his seat and went to the fireplace. Their eyes met and remained fixed on each other. A more human look stole into his face, his lips quivered, a smile came to them; 'Maggie!' was the word that he uttered.

The spell was broken. She fell into his arms, sobbing like a child.

So they stood for some minutes. The sunlight falling in the room lay about her head as it rested upon his breast, covering it with a halo of glory. But he did not see it. A great calm had gathered on the suffering whiteness of his face. His eyes, grown radiant, showed a look at once defiant and despairing as he gazed straight before him into the sunlight. And Maggie sobbed on, sobbed as though her heart were breaking, while in truth, for these passing seconds, she was exquisitely and supremely happy.

He lifted her head very gently, and kissed her forehead. She put her arm round his neck and clung to him, as if to release him were to die. While he was in her arms he was hers. He had told her nothing yet. He had not yet spoken the words which she knew he would speak, and which must divide them for ever. He was hers now, hers for the last time; and she clung to him and pressed him to her as if she would have put into these moments a very eternity of love.

He kissed her again on the forehead. She threw her head back that she might see his face. He was not looking at her, but away from her, down the stream of the sunlight that fell full upon him. The calm of his features chilled her. She knew the meaning of the decision she saw written upon them. Whatever the words might be that he had come to say to her, she had no hope of their remaining unspoken. He put her gently from him, and she untwined her arm from his neck and made no resistance.

'Maggie,' he said presently, 'let us go out. I have much to say to you, and I find it difficult to speak here. Shall we go?'

The suggestion had nothing unusual in it; it had been their custom since their meeting to go out together to talk.

'Yes,' she assented—she was beginning to grow more calm—'let us go. I can wait for what you have to tell me. I will get ready at once.' She went from the room as she spoke.

It had been their custom, too, owing to the nearness of Leigh's

lodgings to the station, to avoid the dreariness on that side of Smeltington by going by train a station or two out into the country. They did so this afternoon, alighting at the end of the journey, which lasted but a few minutes, at a little wayside station from which a lane led to the village a mile or so away.

Not towards the village, but by other lanes and across fields bright with drooping trefoil and the celandine's closing stars, they roamed away from Smeltington. There was a strange hush in the air; the day was still bright, but the sun shone with a hazy, unnatural brightness; the warmth was heavy, and unwholesome for the time of year. Behind them, over Smeltington, great mountains of copper-coloured cloud, their peaks tinged with a glow of sullen red, as if they had caught the reflection of invisible fires hidden among the valleys into which their murky slopes seemed to fall, were rising, range by range, majestically into the sky. The blackbird, the thrush, and other songsters of the early spring chirped but a few fitful notes which seemed to deepen the general hush. Waveney and Maggie, conscious only of the burdened air, took no note of the ominous cloud mountains rising over the town behind them.

'Let us go to the little wood we discovered last autumn; I think I can find it again,' he said, when they had walked some distance almost in silence. 'It cannot be far from here; and we will look for a stump of a tree, or something, to sit down upon. I think,' he added, 'you have had walking enough, Maggie.'

She thanked him, saying she was not tired, and they went on till they paused at last under an ash, over whose leafless boughs the flowers had not yet come, on the edge of a wood that covered the summit of a little hill, from which they had a view of a far stretch of level country, while scarcely more than a hundred yards below them, its surface tinged in places with the sullen copper-red of the clouds, lay the canal, in the fitful gleam of the sunlight. At their feet was a carpet of primroses; the floor of the little wood behind them was white with anemones, dotted here and there with the small green flower of the gloryless; and in the damp field below twinkled a tuft of daffodils, fluttering and dancing in the breeze that unexpectedly ruffled the sunlit surface of the canal. Waveney and Maggie sat down on the trunk of a felled tree.

A change had come over Maggie; a great stillness had followed that first passionate outburst of emotion. Her face was

very white; in her eyes was a look at once sad and hard and unheeding; the physical movements of her body seemed to be made quite automatically.

'Maggie,' he said huskily, for a sensation of choking had come in his throat, 'I cannot explain why I have stayed away from you these last few days until I have told you my story.' He paused for some seconds. 'Do you remember,' he began again, speaking deliberately and with difficulty, 'I said when you first came to Smeltington that I had been there before?'

'Yes,' she answered, doubtfully, not quite sure what thought was in his mind. 'You told me you had stayed with your friend Mr. Bendham.'

'I have other friends who live near Smeltington,' he went on; 'other friends, with whom I have stayed just as often; friends——'

She laid her hand gently on his arm. His intention was clear to her.

'Stop, dear Waveney,' she whispered; 'there is no need to explain. I know all. I have seen her.'

A cry broke from him. He hid his face in his hands. She saw that he was struggling with the great sobs in his throat.

She withdrew her hand from his arm. She sat quite still, looking away from him. Her eyes wandered to the daffodils down in the meadow, and she was conscious that the sunlight had faded from the canal. She dared not speak to him; she dared not utter the words of kindness that welled to her lips; her self-control would so surely have passed from her if she had.

He rose to his feet, and paced once or twice before her. Then he sat down again, and gazed at her with a mournful pleading look, in which sorrow and remorse seemed to contend with a passionate, unchanged, yearning love.

'Maggie,' he said, with faltering utterance, 'have you no word of reproach? Have you nothing to say to me? How I have treated you! How I have failed you! Maggie, Maggie, say something—anything; blame me, upbraid me; but don't look like that. Don't, dear; don't. I can't bear it.'

She withdrew her eyes from the distance—they met his; but she looked away again. She dared not meet that tender, wistful, pleading gaze fixed upon her. She dared not even speak to him yet.

'Tell me, Maggie,' he went on; 'what do you think of me?'

What you would have endured rather than treat me in this way ! I know it ; tell me, isn't it so ?'

She kept her face still turned from him. For his sake as well as her own she must give way to no second yielding to weakness. For this reason she dared let no words of pity or forgiveness escape her. It even seemed to him that there was a note of hardness in her voice as she said :

'Will you tell me about her now ? Have you been married long ?'

The questions chilled him. Why did she ask them so soon ? Had she already accepted the new conditions, and was she already beginning to put him away from her ? Reproaches would have troubled him much less than did this passionless treatment. It seemed to kill the remnant of hope within him.

'I have been married three years,' he said.

'What is her name ?' she asked.

'Nora.'

'Have you——'

'No,' he said, guessing her thought, 'we have no child. I suppose you have seen her in Smeltington ?'

Maggie explained, telling him how she had first seen Lady Keyworth's name in a newspaper on the morning of Gilbert's visit to Burders Street, and had lately met her near Mrs. Latimer's house.

'And you never suspected she might be my wife ?' he exclaimed.

'The thought did occur to me, but——' She paused.

'Maggie, I understand . . . Good heavens !' he cried, starting to his feet, 'was ever man so loved and trusted ?'

He sat down again. There were great beads of perspiration on his forehead. If she had wished for revenge, it would have been hers at that moment. There was silence for some minutes ; then, turning suddenly to her, he exclaimed :

'Maggie, God knows I have never meant to treat you like this. I have always meant to tell you of my marriage. Listen to me now, and I will try to explain to you.

'The reluctance to tell you came to me when we first met at old Job's. It was strong enough, I remember, to make it a relief to me when we decided to keep our stories. Then the next day. We were sitting in Victoria Park, and I was telling you of my poor father's death, and of my subsequent life. You were in tears,

and as I looked at you and thought of the wretchedness of your poor life, and of the hardships you had had to endure, and of all you had gone through since the days when we were children together; when I thought, too, of the love and sympathy there had once been between us, and of how miserable a thing life had become for both of us since (for my life was almost as dreary as yours, though in a different way)—I say, Maggie, when I thought of all this, and felt that, though we had come together again at last, my marriage had put us further apart than we had ever been before, my heart and courage failed me, and I could not tell you my story. I did not keep it from you with any deliberate purpose; I yielded to a momentary impulse. I don't wish to justify myself. I felt the wrong of it even then—while we were still sitting together. But it was not a mistake of a kind that it is easy to put right. Anyhow, I let the chance slip away; it was not until I had got home that I saw the full reach of what I had done.

'Well, during the next few weeks we were often together. Every time we met I felt that we were being drawn closer by sympathy, if not by love. Life for both of us was growing a better thing. You told me so in words, but I could see it as certainly in your face. The tired look was passing from it. In spite of the consciousness that I was treating you cruelly, I was happier myself than I had been for years. Still, I never meant that that state of things should continue. I told myself that I was only waiting for a good opportunity—for something you might say that should lead up to it, should help me out with it—to tell you of my marriage. Such an opportunity, of course, never came. But my position grew intolerable. The day of our expedition to Hastings I realised that I must make an end of it. Before I parted from you that night I had definitely resolved that the next time we met matters should be put right between us.

'The following day, you may remember, I went to the Court. It was a week or two before I could return to London. The first thing I intended to do upon my return was to go to Burders Street and carry out my resolution. And I did. I came to town in the evening, and the next afternoon I drove to old Job's. You know the rest. I found that you had gone.'

He paused. He had been speaking fluently and rapidly; when he spoke again it was slowly, as one who considers the probable effect of his words upon his listener.

'When my surprise at your disappearance had worn off,' he went on, 'I experienced a distinct feeling of relief. Your flight seemed to me like a reprieve. It was a reprieve, mark you, not a reversing of the sentence. I knew you must still be told. But I was glad of the respite that was given me till we should meet again.'

He paused once more, though but for a moment.

'I think,' he continued, 'one's mind is not at all inclined to stand still. An event seldom happens which leaves us just where it found us. One is very quick to develop new thoughts under new conditions. If a prisoner, on the morning of his execution, were to receive a reprieve of three days, he would not feel as he had felt three days before. Hope would spring up; his thoughts would turn from the gallows; he would find it very hard to believe that death still lay just three days before him. Something of this kind happened to me. I never doubted that I must still tell you of my marriage; but somehow, involuntarily, almost unconsciously, I found that I began to ask myself whether it was so absolutely certain that I must give you up.'

There was a deliberation, an absence of passion, an unwavering fixedness of purpose in his manner which impressed Maggie even more than did his words. She felt that matters were about to take a turn which she had not foreseen.

'It is this question,' he went on, 'which I have been asking myself from that day to this. In it lies the explanation of my not having told you of my marriage all through these succeeding months, the explanation of my having kept away from you during these last few days. I could not tell you of my marriage till that question was answered. I have kept away from you because I have felt that these days, while'—he lowered his voice—'your father lay in the house, were not the time to give you the answer. Now you know of my marriage. . . . And I will give you my answer.'

A faint tinge of colour had come into Maggie's white cheeks. She was conscious of a new feeling, but whether it was one of hope, or of fear, or of mere nervous curiosity, she could not have told. But she did feel, without doubt, that the passionless resolve with which he spoke, seeming, as it did, to spring from an intense conviction, was beginning to hold her will with the power of a strong fascination.

'What is the answer?' she asked faintly.

He took her hand as it lay on her lap and held it in his own. 'It is, Maggie,' he said, in a tone scarcely less deliberate, though more impassioned, 'that I shall not give you up: that we shall not part till'—he paused—'death parts us.'

She drew back her hand; the colour faded from her cheek; she turned her face from him.

'Ah, dear,' she murmured.

'What?'

'It is impossible.'

'It is not impossible. Listen to me, Maggie. Our love makes it possible. Such a love as ours is the most sacred thing in human life.'

She turned her face to him. 'Your wife.'

'Ah, you don't understand. I must explain to you. My wife—the simple truth is, my wife hates me.'

He saw the colour come to her cheek. 'Hates me,' he repeated. 'She has never cared for me—not from the first. She married me, I believe, simply for my——' He checked himself. 'No,' he said, 'let us avoid all that. I have quite enough to answer for. The failure has been as much my fault as hers—every bit. I was wrong to marry her.'

'Did you not—— But you loved her?'

'Yes, I loved her. But, as I see it now, looking back at it, it was not the right kind of love.'

He felt how searchingly her eyes were fixed upon him.

'She did not win the best part of me, you see; that's where it was. But still, you know, she *did* win me, I *did* love her, and I tried to make the best of it. She made it fearfully hard. She seemed somehow to resent my caring for her. It sounds strange when one says it, but I believe that was how it was—she disliked my loving her. I suppose it came from her having no love for me. It made life for us fearfully difficult. She gave me nothing—absolutely nothing. Her whole life—the whole sum of her mental existence—was devoted to her world, to her life in London and so on. She would never step an inch outside it. There was not a taste nor an interest of mine (outside her world) which she would take the trouble to share. And—don't misunderstand me—I don't blame her for that. I knew—or, at least, I might have known—that it would be so before I married her. I tell you because I want you to understand how it is between us. I want you to know how hideous it has been from the first; hideous it has been—hideous.'

'Even from the first? Have you never been happy together?'

'No, never; not from the first. And, of course, lately, matters have grown worse. I believe Nora hates me, and—Heaven help me!—I think I have come to hate her. That's how it is with a marriage like ours. That's the curse of it. Every day things get worse. The chain galls; the iron eats into the flesh; it maddens one never to escape the torture. One comes to loathe the chain. One's whole nature becomes poisoned and cankered and corrupted. A union like ours is a kind of moral leprosy; the sounder and better part of one rots away in it. It is impossible for Nora and me to go on living like this; the chain must be broken for both our sakes—for her sake as well as mine. I want you to realise that very clearly.'

There was silence for some moments.

The sun had disappeared behind the topmost ridge of the vast cloud mountains that now nearly covered the sky. All brightness had faded from the day. Yet Maggie did not notice it. For her it had grown less dark. Hope had not definitely returned, but she had lost the deadness of despair. The mere exercise of the mental faculties involved in following Waveney's revelations was enough to effect that.

'Does it seem to you more possible now?' he asked.

She did not answer him for a moment. 'The awful responsibility,' she murmured.

'But if we are convinced we are right?'

'Are you—can you be convinced you are right?'

'Absolutely,' he answered unflinchingly.

There was a pause.

'And your marriage is so very wretched?' she asked.

'As wretched as marriage can be. There is now not the smallest pretence of affection on either side; there is nothing but a wearing and galling aversion. The chain must be broken—clearly understand that—whether *our* union comes to pass or not. . . . And what would our union be? What is it I propose to you? That we should live out our days in empty dreams of idleness and pleasure? Heaven forbid that I should propose to you anything so foolish, so preposterously impossible. What I propose is something very different. It is this. That we should go where we may begin our lives anew after a better plan, make for ourselves new ties, and, if the opportunity is given us, strive to accomplish some not unworthy object of achievement. We are still young; we should

still have a long stretch of life before us ; you have still a dash of your old faith in my powers. Oh, Maggie, what might we not make of our lives in this new world ! With you to help me, what might I not accomplish ! We have both suffered ; you have known affliction, I disappointment ; we have both gained inestimable experience. Beginning life now sanely, reasonably, hoping for good days, but with no expectation of impossible happiness, what a future might lie before us ! Darling, what can prevent us from making it ours ?

As she listened to his words, far as she might still be from acceding to them, it seemed to Maggie as if the bolts had been drawn back in those gates of Hope—as if they were beginning to move on their hinges and to open.

‘What can prevent us, dearest ?’ he repeated.

‘I can’t reason with you, dear ; but I feel that it is not possible.’

‘I have felt so, too,’ he answered. ‘But reason has convinced me that it is possible. What is not possible is that my marriage, a marriage in nothing but the form, a marriage bringing with it only misery and degeneration, should debar me from a union—a union not only of sympathy and love, but one certain to be attended with the best possible results for us. Our love, dearest, belongs to our deepest side—is rooted and grounded in the best of us. It is not, like the love of a boy and girl, a thing only of summer days—a dream woven by the imagination from a tissue of ignorance and illusion. No, Maggie ; we are old friends, you and I. We know one another. Our love is the last expression of our friendship. We profoundly need one another ; that’s why we love, you and I.’

Ah ! the gates had opened. Hope was there, shining within, faint, dim, lost in haze and obscurity like the sun in a winter’s sky ; but there, nevertheless, and looming clearer every minute as the opening gates gave a larger view.

‘Yes, that’s true enough ; but the responsibility——’

‘Of not accepting the future I propose ? Do you think of that ? Of what your refusal will cost me—of the future you will doom me to ? Of——’ A look of such acute pain had come into her face that he checked himself and abstained. ‘Perhaps, Maggie,’ he went on more gently, ‘you are still thinking of my wife—of her claims upon me. But what are her claims to yours ? There is no love between us ; on her side there has never been love ; and there is nothing now but increasing aversion. If we had

had children, it would have been different. They would have had claims upon me. But what are Nora's claims compared with yours?' 'Ay, indeed! Ay, indeed! What are her claims to mine?' thought Maggie; and the gates seemed to be opening wider, wider still, yet wider, and Hope was there within, shining clearer and larger every moment.

'What are her claims to yours?' he repeated. 'Without me, life will be better for her than with me; but without me, what will life be to you? Tell me, Maggie, have you a friend in the world except me? And then, dear, think of the past. Is our love a thing of yesterday; or were we betrothed in our babyhood by those who loved us? Why, Maggie,' he exclaimed, 'you have been my little sweetheart as long as I can remember!'

The gates were wide open. There within, glorious and clear as the noonday sun, shone refulgent, reawakened Hope.

She saw a glorious future before her, offered in the name of all she held most sacred in life. Another judgment, a better than hers, had cleared the difficulties from the path, and was beseeching her to take it. Truly, that other woman's claims were nothing to hers. Every longing of her heart bade her put out her hand and seize her happiness. Yet she must pause. Reason would be convinced; conscience would make itself heard.

The exquisite agony and bliss, the alternating hope and despair, of this bewildering and torturing struggle!

Her heart was too full, and her brain was too busy, for words. She remained silent.

'Maggie, tell me,' he pleaded tenderly, 'what can part us? What can set aside our claims upon each other, and the hopes and wishes of the dead? We are united by all that is most sacred in life. Tell me, dearest, what can keep us apart? We shall not be the first who have defied the world. Some of the very noblest men and women have defied it just as we shall do. We may have much to endure from it; but remember, it would punish us with equal readiness for any and every other breach of its conventionalities. Be unconventional, and be you poet, prophet, priest, reformer, what you will, it will hate and punish you just the same.'

It was not conviction. It was a gradual, almost unconscious yielding. Reason was not convinced, and conscience, though its voice had fallen low, was not satisfied. But the alternative was too terrible. She had not the strength at that moment, with him beside her, to shut the gates of Hope upon herself.

'I can plead no more,' he went on, half mournfully, half petulantly. 'I can only wait for your answer. But do try to believe me, dearest. I know you love me; you cannot send me from you. Listen to me, Maggie; her claims are nothing to yours. Think of the hideous thing life must be for us apart. Speak, Maggie; tell me you trust me; say it is possible.'

No word escaped her. In her inmost heart she knew it was not possible. In her inmost heart she did not consent. But he took his answer from her look of pleading love.

The next instant he held her in his arms, and, pressing her to his breast, kissed her passionately again and again.

'Mine!' he cried. 'Mine till death; mine in the sight of God!'

At that instant, while the words were still on his lips, a livid flash, struck out as it seemed from the black cloud just above them, glanced luridly before their eyes, and was followed by a near crashing peal of thunder. A cry broke from Maggie, and tightening her hold of Waveney, she hid her face against his breast. Though the invisible sun had barely set, it was wellnigh as dark as the twilight of a winter's day. The air had grown chill, and, instead of the sultry hush, seemed to be lit with a myriad voices as the wind in wild, fitful gusts swept and eddied through the trees, making the bare branches writhe and moan, and filling the little wood with sounds like the yells of the spirits of the approaching storm.

'It is not safe here,' he cried, hurrying her into the open. 'There is a cottage below there—along by the canal. Come, dearest, let us make for it as fast as we can.'

Another flash, more vivid than the first, followed by a yet closer crash of thunder, greeted his words. They hurried rapidly down the field and along the towing-path. The usually placid surface of the canal was lashed into angry little waves, which tossed themselves against the banks with a spiteful hiss. But the cottage was soon reached. An old woman opened the door in answer to Waveney's knocks, and, as soon as she had learnt their errand, admitted them to the shelter of her roof.

(To be continued.)

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